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## ABSTRACT

This number of the journal contains the following articles: "A Language-and-Learning Framework for a Theory of Language Teaching" (Maira Chimombo); "Using Authentic Video Materials in the Language Classroom" (Kathleen Kitao); "An American Teacher in Kiev: Impressions of English Education in the U.S.S.R." (Ellen Dussourd); "What Am I Doing? Mistaking!" (Thomas Tinkham); "The Operator in the English Verb System" (John Crow); "The Alibi Game" (William McOmie); "Ambiguity in the Classroom: There's Nothing to Be Afraid Of" (Carolyn Brown); and "Bringing ESL Students to Court" (John Bistolas). There is also a review of the book, "The American Way: An Introduction to American Culture," by Edward N. Kearny, Mary Ann Kearny, and Jo Ann Crandall. (MSE)

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# CROSS 潮 CURRENTS

A Journal of  
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Volume XII, Number 2, Spring/Summer 1986

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## Cross Currents

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*Cross Currents* was first published in 1972 with an emphasis on Japan and Japanese students of English. In order to serve the needs of our growing international readership better, we strive to publish articles concerned with teaching methodologies, techniques, and general issues which are multicultural rather than culture-specific. While articles demonstrating solid and thoughtful research are greatly appreciated, always kept in mind is the necessity for readability and practicality for our readers, the classroom teachers. We make every effort to balance abstract and theoretical articles with articles directly applicable to the classroom. Short practical articles are featured in our Bright Ideas section.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Vol. XII, No. 2, Spring/Summer 1986

|                                                                                                                                                               |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES .....                                                                                                                               | iv   |
| ABOUT THIS ISSUE .....                                                                                                                                        | viii |
| ARTICLES                                                                                                                                                      |      |
| A Language-and-Learning Framework for a Theory of<br>Language Teaching<br><i>Moirá Chimombo</i> .....                                                         | 1    |
| Using Authentic Video Materials in the Language<br>Classroom<br><i>Kathleen Kitao</i> .....                                                                   | 17   |
| An American Teacher in Kiev: Impressions of English<br>Education in the U.S.S.R.<br><i>Ellen Dussourd</i> .....                                               | 29   |
| What Am I Doing? Mistaking!<br><i>Thomas Tinkham</i> .....                                                                                                    | 47   |
| The Operator in the English Verb System<br><i>John Crow</i> .....                                                                                             | 53   |
| BRIGHT IDEAS                                                                                                                                                  |      |
| The Alibi Game<br><i>William McOmie</i> .....                                                                                                                 | 61   |
| Ambiguity in the Classroom: There's Nothing To Be<br>Afraid Of<br><i>Carolyn Brown</i> .....                                                                  | 66   |
| Bringing ESL Students to Court<br><i>John Bistolas</i> .....                                                                                                  | 69   |
| BOOK REVIEWS                                                                                                                                                  |      |
| Edward N. Kearny, Mary Ann Kearny, and<br>Jo Ann Crandall, <i>The American Way:<br/>An Introduction to American Culture</i><br>( <i>Cynthia Etter</i> ) ..... | 77   |
| PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED .....                                                                                                                                   | 80   |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS .....                                                                                                                                           | 83   |

## Summaries of the Articles

### **A Language-and-Learning Framework for a Theory of Language Teaching**

*Moirá Chimombo*

Language teachers often lack a theoretical framework on which to base their teaching. The result is that they often teach without knowing why they do what they do. In this article, the author explains two frameworks which language teachers may use to evaluate established language teaching methods, and subsequently develop their own philosophy of language teaching. One is a language framework adapted from Mackey (1967), which analyzes recent linguistic theories in terms of content, expression, substance, and form. The other is a learning framework developed by the author. This framework analyzes recent learning theories in terms of internal and external learning, and meaningful and rote learning. The author uses these frameworks to evaluate three established methods, the Audiolingual Method, the Cognitive Code Approach, and Community Language Learning.

### **Using Authentic Video Materials in the Language Classroom**

*Kathleen Kitao*

Recently, there has been much interest in the use of video materials in ESL. Although many institutions have invested in video equipment and tapes, this equipment is often either unused or underused. In this paper, the author discusses the advantages and potential problems of using video and offers practical suggestions for using video in the classroom. Suggestions are made on how to choose videos for the classroom and how to design support materials.

**An American Teacher in Kiev:  
Impressions of English Education in the U.S.S.R.**

*Ellen Dussourd*

As a participant in the American Field Service's U.S.-U.S.S.R. Teachers' Exchange Program, the author taught for ten weeks at the Kiev State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages in the fall of 1982. In this article, she recounts her experiences from both professional and personal standpoints. The professional aspects she outlines include the exchange program, her responsibilities as a visiting teacher, and the Institute curriculum. She also gives some general impressions of English education in the Soviet Union, and describes two experiences she had watching this educational system at work: a Suggestopedia class which she observed and a special English school which she visited. From the personal standpoint, she focuses on her lifestyle in Kiev, her overall impressions of Soviet life, and Soviet impressions of Americans and their way of life.

**What Am I Doing? Mistaking!**

*Thomas Tinkham*

The present progressive tense, the *be + ing* form, seems to be a natural choice for introducing action verbs to beginning ESL students. It possesses an immediacy that other tenses do not and is thus easy to demonstrate in the classroom. Unfortunately, our reliance on this verb form, which is so easy to teach at the early levels, can produce problems at more advanced levels. Often, students incorrectly persist in using the components of this tense when trying to express other tenses. This paper explores problems stemming from an early reliance on the present progressive tense and offers alternative ways of introducing action verbs to beginning students.

**The Operator in the English Verb System**

*John T. Crow*

The English verb system is very difficult for non-native students to master. How to manipulate the verb in operations such as negation, yes/no questions, WH-questions, ellipses, and so on, is a

problem that constantly plagues ESL/EFL students. In order to simplify the English verb system, the author suggests the use of "the operator." In this article, the concept of "the operator" is explained, along with the rules that govern its manipulation and several of its applications.

## **Bright Ideas**

### **The Alibi Game**

*William McOmie*

Imagining a crime and constructing fictional alibis can be an interesting way to practice speaking English. During an interrogation phase, students practice a variety of past tense questions as well as accurate narration and recall of details. It also gives more advanced students ample opportunity to practice more sophisticated language functions such as evasion and hedging in a suspenseful context. This Bright Idea contains suggestions for using the game in the classroom and presents a sample of the actual language that might be used.

### **Ambiguity in the Classroom: There's Nothing To Be Afraid Of**

*Carolyn Brown*

In this Bright Idea, the author recounts a classroom experience which prompted her to re-evaluate her ideas about what a language class should be. Until this occurred, she had felt that everything should be controlled and disciplined in the classroom. After analyzing her experience, she came to the conclusion that the teacher has a responsibility to make the classroom a riskier place in order to recreate the reality of the world in which the students will find themselves when they leave the classroom.

### **Bringing ESL Students to Court**

*John Bistolas*

In an advanced ESL/EFL classroom, students often need to be provided with a structured atmosphere in which they can use language to discuss abstract concepts, state opinions, and substan-

tiate their opinions with specific details. This Bright Idea presents an activity which may provide such an atmosphere. Essentially, it demonstrates how to set up an imaginary courtroom in which students can put a fictitious character on trial, debate the crime of the accused, weigh the evidence, and reach a verdict. In doing so, students work together in teams, formulate arguments to present to the class, quickly develop a rapport among themselves, and use language to express a host of notions and functions.

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue of *Cross Currents* contains articles which fall into three broad categories: theoretical, practical, and cultural. This is a combination which we at *Cross Currents* feel accurately represents the goals of the journal, that is, the balance of abstract or theoretical articles with articles directly applicable to the classroom, and articles on cultural and cross-cultural topics.

"A Language-and-Learning Framework for a Theory of Language Teaching," by Moira Chimombo, falls into the first category. In this article, the author proposes that teachers should not only be aware of existing theories which define both language and learning, but that they should develop their own philosophy of teaching in order to be able to evaluate the relationship between established methods and their own ideas, and thus be effective in their own teaching situation. To help teachers to develop such a philosophy, two frameworks are offered. The first one concerns language and takes into account expression, substance, and form. The second framework concerns learning and considers affective, cognitive, reflex, and stimulus-response learning. The author goes on to evaluate three current teaching methods in the light of these frameworks.

Our next two articles both concern grammar, and blend theory and practice. In "What Am I Doing? Mistaking!," Thomas Tinkham re-evaluates the common practice of starting EFL/ESL texts and courses with the present progressive tense. He contends that although this is a convenient and easy tense to start with, doing so can cause the student to over-generalize the present progressive, thus causing problems as other tenses are introduced. He then suggests some alternatives to beginning a course with this tense. One possible alternative is outlined in the article by John Crow, entitled "The Operator in the English Verb System," in which Crow suggests a system for teaching verbs in English. The system is relatively easy to use, causes less confusion among students than other methods of teaching the English verb system, and is particularly helpful for those who are teaching a structurally-based curriculum.

In recent years, there has been considerable interest in the use of video in the language classroom. Publishers are now offering a

wide range of video material which has been specially designed for ESL/EFL students. There are some authentic materials, such as news broadcasts, available commercially, but as yet there is a dearth of good authentic videos complemented by solid support material. In most cases, teachers are obliged to design their own material if they wish to use authentic videos in the classroom. ~~In~~ "Using Authentic Video Materials in the Language Classroom," Kathleen Kitao provides a good basic introduction to using video. She describes the advantages and potential problems associated with video, suggests how to design and use one's own materials, and gives examples of support material which she herself designed.

Unfortunately, in recent months we have received very few articles dealing with cultural topics. We are therefore pleased to include in this issue Ellen Dussourd's article, "An American Teacher in Kiev: Impressions of English Education in the 'U.S.S.R.," in which the author describes her experiences as a visiting teacher at the Kiev State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages. She outlines the English education system in the Soviet Union, and also provides us with insights into how the Soviet people view both their own and Western culture.

This issue also contains three Bright Ideas. The first one, "Ambiguity in the Classroom: There's Nothing To Be Afraid Of" by Carolyn Brown, suggests that teachers should relinquish some of their traditional control in the classroom. By doing this, teachers can better prepare students for the often ambiguous and unpredictable world outside of the classroom. This seems especially pertinent when we consider that many EFL students will be entering a different, and thus more confusing, culture than their own. In "The Alibi Game," Bill McOmie presents a vehicle for practicing many types of language in a situation that students can enjoy and get involved in. It facilitates the use of more advanced gambits such as evasion and hedging, as well as standard WH-questions, interrupting, and so on. In terms of content, our next Bright Idea by John Bistolas seems like a suitable follow-up to "The Alibi Game." In "Bringing ESL Students to Court," Bistolas describes a court case which students act out. Students must decide which character has to stand trial, and whether s/he is guilty or innocent. This provides an excellent opportunity for students to express abstract notions as well as standard gambits for clarification, giving opinions, interrupting, and so on. This issue also includes a review of "The

American Way: An Introduction to American Culture," a text designed to give the EFL/ESL student a basic introduction to understanding American culture and the values that stem from it.

As most of our readers probably know, *Cross Currents* is sponsored by the Language Institute of Japan. We would like to welcome John Fleischauer, the new Director of LIOJ, on his return to Japan, and to thank him very sincerely for the support and advice he has given to the staff of *Cross Currents* over the past few months.

Finally, we would like to thank our readers for their continued patronage and encourage them to continue to write to us and to send us any manuscripts which they feel might be appropriate for inclusion in *Cross Currents*.

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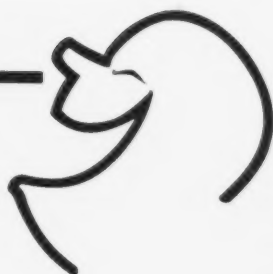
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## A Language-and-Learning Framework for a Theory of Language Teaching

*Moira Chimombo*

### Introduction

"If you want to get ahead, get a theory" (Karmiloff-Smith and Inhelder 1974/75) is a common piece of advice these days. But in the field of language teaching the advice appears to have been largely ignored. Orem writes, "We have been very lax in developing a cadre of teachers who know why they do what they do, and who have bothered to develop a philosophy of language teaching..." (1981:2). Yet a theory of teaching is valuable for research, instructional design, and teacher education purposes (Klauer 1985).

Traditionally, in order to develop such a philosophy, teachers have had to gather enough information about a wide variety of language teaching approaches, methods, and techniques and to choose those which are appropriate to the circumstances. Providing this information for student teachers is relatively easy. An abundance of literature exists concerning the relative merits of each of the established methods. Language teacher education programmes usually contain at least one required course that surveys the full range of approaches, methods, and techniques. However, it is not sufficient simply to expose teachers to other people's theories. If teachers are to be selectively and effectively eclectic, in other words, to know why they do what they do, they must, in addition, have a framework of their own in order to evaluate the relationship between established methods and their own ideas.

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Moira Chimombo has an Ed.D. in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. She has been a lecturer in English at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, since 1981. Her work involves training secondary school teachers of English and teaching courses in theoretical and applied linguistics to undergraduates.

Finding a framework is not easy. Klauer (1985:15) proposes a General Teaching Algorithm (GTA) which analyzes the following: (a) what a student is required to learn so that the established objective will be reached, (b) which processes are required within a student so that learning of the intended subject matter will take place, and (c) which processes within a student are required by a given teaching act so that one can choose the appropriate teaching act. If language teaching involves more than knowing what language is and how it is learned, teachers need two frameworks on which to base informed decisions about what and how to teach in the language classroom: a framework for defining language and another for defining learning. From these, teachers can make informed decisions on how to teach. Using these two frameworks it should be possible to:

- a) analyze established language teaching methods in terms of what they derive, consciously or unconsciously, from linguistic and learning theories;
- b) allow for teachers' evaluation of their own preferred methods.

This article presents both a language framework which was adapted from Mackey (1967:8-10) and a learning framework. An attempt is then made to show the implications that a particular view of language holds for a view of learning, in other words, the logical relationship between the two frameworks. As examples, language teaching methods will be analyzed in these terms. Finally, teachers will be encouraged to evaluate established methods of teaching and to develop their own eclectic philosophy of language teaching.

### **A Framework for Analyzing Language**

Mackey's framework for the analysis of linguistic theories (see figure 1) provides the most comprehensive framework available to enable teachers to analyze what their students are required to learn. Although it is difficult to understand, those teachers who make the effort will reach a sophisticated understanding of the complexity of language.

Mackey analyzed recent linguistic theories in terms of content, expression, substance, and form. These aspects are represented in figure 1.

Figure 1: A Framework for the Analysis of Linguistic Theories  
(adapted from Mackey 1967:8-10)

|                                                         | SUBSTANCE<br>Phenomena & Experience                                                        | FORM                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CONTENT<br>Universal material which language draws upon | A) Cultural, Pragmatic, Semantic, and Lexical Universals, regardless of specific languages | B) Cultural, Pragmatic, Semantic, and Lexical items of a particular language |
| EXPRESSION                                              | C) Phonetic and Writing Universals, regardless of specific language                        | D) Phonetic and Writing characteristics of a particular language             |

Mackey's analysis divided language into four major quadrants, in which the four aspects of language overlap. Area A (Substance/Content) consists of all the things in the world that can be talked about (universal phenomena and experience), independent of the language that is used to talk about them. In other words, Area A consists of cultural, pragmatic, semantic, and lexical universals. Area C (Substance/Expression) consists of all the grammars, sounds, and letters of all languages in the world, that is, phonetics and all writing systems in the world. Thus Substance (AC) is the universal material of the world upon which language draws.

Area B (Form/Content) is the socially agreed systematization or formalization of Area A (Substance/Content) into the meanings of a particular language. Let us take, for instance, a lexical example: *snow*. It is a phenomenon which may be experienced by human beings (Area A). But it is not experienced by all human beings, because in some parts of the world the climate is too warm for it to exist. Thus a word for *snow* may appear in the lexicon (Area B) of those languages spoken in areas of the world where the climate is appropriate (compare English or Eskimo languages). However, it does not appear in the lexicon of Chichewa, a Bantu language spoken in Central Africa, because Chichewa speakers have not experienced it. By contrast, Chichewa has different words for describing stages in the growth of the staple food, maize, unlike English.

Just as at the level of the lexicon, Area B also translates the cultural, pragmatic, and semantic universals into language-specific features. In terms of culture, the relationship between universal and language-specific features can be seen in how men think about the nature of universals (for example, time) and how the grammar of a specific language shows that relationship. Pragmatic universals are concerned with the general nature of context (for example, social status) and how these contexts are encoded. Language-specific pragmatics, however, examines the differences in context (for example, social status) between two languages and how the encoding takes place (Levinson 1983:10). Although no consensus has been reached on the nature of semantic universals, which are very closely tied to lexical ones, Kempson states,

It is generally claimed by those linguists who postulate the existence of semantic components that the components in terms of which lexical meaning is represented are not themselves lexical items, part of the language being described, but are part of the metalanguage, the theoretical vocabulary set up to describe all languages. Components such as [MALE], [ADULT], [NEVER MARRIED] are therefore universal constructs in terms of which such lexical items as bachelor in English can be characterized.

(Kempson 1977:87)

Area D (Form/Expression) is the systematization or formalization of Area C (Substance/Expression) into the phonemes and graphemes, morphemes, and syntax utilized by a particular language. Thus, Area C represents phonetic and syntactic universals, so it includes, for example, every single humanly produced phonetic variant of the phoneme /r/, while Area D represents whichever particular variants of /r/ a language may utilize. In Japanese, there is no phonemic distinction made between /l/ and /r/, yet Japanese speakers can learn to produce that distinction in a second language (albeit with difficulty) because it is a humanly possible distinction that is made by other languages.

Mackey's framework thus gives us the following comprehensive definition of language: Language is an essentially human form of behavior which makes use of a system of communication consisting of arbitrary symbols, both vocal and visual, which have been assigned meaning by a speech community (cf. Brown 1980:5).

### A Framework for Analyzing Learning

Probably most teachers, from time to time, have adopted conflicting features from a variety of learning theories without ever realizing that they were basically contradictory in nature and could not be brought into harmony with each other. (Bigge 1982:4)

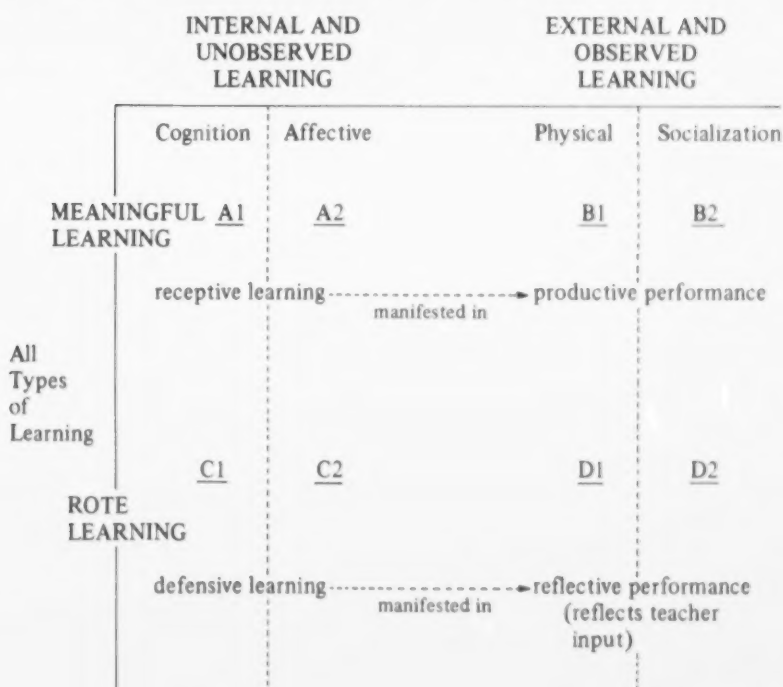
Language teachers are likely to be more aware of conflicting features of various linguistic theories than they are of conflicting features of different learning theories, as a result of the more prevalent emphasis on the relevance of linguistic theories to language teacher education. To counter this emphasis, it is therefore important for language teachers to have a framework for analyzing how students learn. Although Fanselow (1976) emphasizes the need for language teachers to be aware of assumptions about learning, other information is scarce. Following is a framework which has been developed with a special concern to preserve a congruence with the framework for language, because of the implications that a particular view of language holds for how language is learned and/or taught. This framework may be a starting point for teachers to become more aware of their philosophy of language teaching.

Recent learning theories are analyzed in terms of four aspects: internal and external learning, and meaningful and rote learning, as represented in figure 2. These aspects overlap in the four major quadrants of the framework.

Each area of the proposed learning framework may be translated into different types of learning. Area A (Cognition/Affect-Meaningful Learning) consists of those types of learning which require humans to use all their cognitive and affective (internal, unobservable) capacities to learn, that is, the universal cognitive and affective characteristics of humans, independent of the different societies in which they live. Stevick (1974) refers to this kind of learning as receptive, that is, learning which is not blocked by any cognitive or affective barriers.

Area B refers to the specific levels of perceptual and conceptual development (and their limitations) which are reached through each individual's physical development and his/her community's culture-specific socialization practices. For example, a number of studies have revealed variations in susceptibility of different cultural groups to perceptual illusions, often related to the urban-rural differences in the development of understanding of concrete

Figure 2: A Framework for the Analysis of Learning Theories



physical objects. Likewise, different cultural groups evidence variations in classification of objects according to abstract concepts such as shape, color, and function (Evans 1970). We can only infer back from the external, observable features of physical development and socialization in Area B to the internal, unobservable kinds of cognitive and affective development that take place in Area A. For example, one can observe a child using causal conjunctions (such as "because" in English) to connect two propositions related by cause and effect and infer from his/her language the level of cognitive development reached. This kind of receptive learning leads to what Stevick (1974) has called productive performance, that is, language output that the learner has voluntarily invested time and effort to master.

On the other hand, Area C consists of the types of learning which are associated in humans with very young infants. These

types of learning are labeled reflex learning and/or stimulus-response learning. They make only minimal demands on cognition and affect, but are still internal and unobservable, although of course the actions they result in are observable. We cannot see the process by which the infant with a wet diaper learns to cry in order to get the mother to change it, but we can observe both the cry and the mother's response.

The kinds of learning that are described in Area D are those which rely on drill. Area D thus includes learning the pronunciation of the phonemes of a particular language in isolation, out of the context of meaningful sentences, and possibly even out of the context of words. Another example would be learning mechanically, without understanding, to imitate the past tense by simply adding the morpheme *-ed* to the base form of given verbs. Such learning, which Stevick calls defensive, leads to reflective performance (Stevick 1974), that is, language output that reflects not the learner's needs and investment but the teacher's input, which the learner mechanically parrots.

Those aspects of learning indicated in the above framework correspond to learning theories in the following way. Area A1 (Cognitive/Internal/Meaningful) is that area of learning which emphasizes the role of the mind in acquiring new information as, for example, the rationalist (for example, Descartes and his successors) view of learning which considers reason the source of knowledge, or, as another example, the cognitive view (such as Chomsky's) which holds that man is born with the innate ability to learn language. Other cognitive views of learning (such as Gagne's which combines behaviorist and cognitive views in his eight conditions of learning from signal learning to problem solving) combine Area A1 with that of C1 (Cognitive/Internal/Rote). The Gestalt view of such psychologists as Wertheimer, Koffka, and Kohler encompasses Areas A and B (Meaningful Learning), in which "learning is a process of gaining or changing insights, outlooks, expectations or thought patterns" (Bigge 1982:9). The opposite of the rationalist view, Area D1 (Physical/External/Rote), is that area of learning which is seen as exclusively observable, of the associative type. In other words, it represents the empiricist (Skinnerian) view of learning defined as "a change in observable behavior which occurs through stimuli and responses becoming related according to mechanistic principles" (Bigge 1982:9). The

neo-behaviorists (Osgood and Mowrer) have combined Areas C1 and C2 (Cognitive/Internal/Rote and Affective/Internal/Rote) and D2 (Social/External/Rote) to D1 in order to account for language learning and the role of motivation in learning, thus allowing a "place for mediational and emotional processes that are not directly observable but may be inferred, and even studied, from their overt manifestations" (Rivers 1964:29). The humanist psychologist's (for example, Rogers') view of learning as "a unified, personal, and social experience that bestows unique and special worth on the learner" (Curran 1972:11) appears to incorporate all areas of the framework, cognitive, affective, physical, and social, as being essential to the development of the fully functioning person.

*The Relationship between the Language Framework and the Learning Framework*

A number of well-known teachers and researchers have already pointed out that a particular view of language can lead to a particular view of learning, which determines how the language is to be taught. In a comparison of the content of the two frameworks for language and learning (see Tables 1a and 1b) the implications of the relationship between language and learning might be more clearly seen. I shall first demonstrate how the frameworks may be used to plan language activities appropriate for particular intended outcomes, by explaining the relationships between each of the areas of the two frameworks. To exemplify the relationship, three established language teaching methods will be presented: the Audiolingual Method, the Cognitive Code Approach, and the Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning Approach. (For a more detailed explanation of how the frameworks describe both these and other language teaching methods, see Chimombo 1984.)

Table 1a represents the four quadrants of the language framework parallel to those of the learning framework. Table 1b compares the four parallel aspects of language and learning. The implications of Tables 1a and 1b are that certain kinds of learning are more appropriate for certain aspects of language to be learned.

**Table 1a: Comparison of the Four Quadrants of the Language and Learning Frameworks**

|        | Language                                                       | Learning                                                                                 |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area A | Phenomena+Experience-Substance-Content                         | Cognition+Affect-Internal-Meaningful Learning (Receptive Learning)                       |
| Area B | Form-Content (Pragmatics/Semantics/Lexicon)                    | Physical Development+Socialization-External-Meaningful Learning (Productive Performance) |
| Area C | Phenomena+Experience-Substance-Expression (Phonetics/Graphics) | Cognition+Affect-Internal-Rote Learning (Defensive Learning)                             |
| Area D | Form-Expression (Syntax/Morphology/Phonology/Orthography)      | Physical Development+Socialization-External-Rote Learning (Reflective Performance)       |

**Table 1b: Comparison of the Four Aspects of Language and Learning**

|           |                                          |                                                                     |
|-----------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Areas A-C | Substance (Universals of Language)       | Internal Learning (Universals of Human Cognition/Affect)            |
| Areas B-D | Form (Specifics of Particular Languages) | External Learning (Specifics of Physical Development/Socialization) |
| Areas A-B | Content (Referents/Reference)            | Meaningful Learning                                                 |
| Areas C-D | Expression                               | Rote Learning                                                       |

**Relationships: Areas A and B**

Area A of the language framework (Phenomena and Experience/Substance/Content) and the corresponding area of the learning framework (Cognition and Affect/Internal/Meaningful Learning) are related primarily in the importance attached to meaning, whether in language (the phenomena and experiences of human-kind that constitute the referents of language) or in learning (the

cognitive and affective development of man that arises from meaningful learning), and also to the universals of language and learning. In addition there is a close specific relationship between cognition and phenomena because it is in the process of cognitive development that men develop an understanding of the phenomena (concepts) that are the referents of language. In the same way, there is a close, but somewhat different, relationship between affect and experience, in that men's affective development is to a large extent determined by the kinds of experiences they have, and how these experiences are perceived.

The relationship between Area B of the language framework (Form/Content) and that of the learning framework (Physical Development and Socialization/External/Meaningful Learning) is also seen in the importance attached to meaning. In this case, the meaning is linguistic, that is, concerning the words (reference) by which we refer to the phenomena and experience (referents) of Area A. On the other hand, the meaning of the learning is that of productive performance, in which learners are observed creating their own meaningful contexts for the language to be learned. For example, Peace Corps volunteers working as health nurses in rural communities in any country of Africa will very quickly pick up the words and phrases in the local language which describe the diseases they deal with every day, because these have immediate meaning.

It has been suggested, both in first and second language acquisition research (Bloom, Miller, and Hood 1978; Hatch 1978), that there may be a relationship between physical development and socialization (learning), and pragmatics, semantics, and lexicon (language). For example, some researchers concluded that "the pattern of child sentences is isomorphic with the pattern of child actions" (Bloom, Miller, and Hood 1978:203). Others have claimed that "what the child mentions in sentences is determined by practical considerations in the situation" (Bloom, Miller, and Hood 1978:199). These views are not mutually exclusive, because both recognize the complex relationship within and between the associated aspects of language and those of learning.

The implication of the relationship between language and learning in Areas A and B is that "experience is what gives meaning to language" (Gattegno 1972:8). In other words, when students are exposed to the phenomena and experiences (the referents)

that they need and their cognitive organizers and affective filters (Dulay and Burt 1978) are not inhibiting their learning, they will devise their own particular cognitive and/or affective meanings from them. This cannot be given to a student by a teacher and suggests that an acquisition-rich environment (Krashen 1977) providing large amounts of comprehensible language input to the learner is essential if the intended outcome of language learning is successful near-native competence in the target language.

*Relationships: Areas C and D*

With respect to Area C of the two frameworks (Phenomena and Experience/Substance/Expression and Cognition and Affect/Internal/Rote Learning), the primary relationship is between Expression and Rote Learning. (The relationship between Substance and Internal Learning overlaps Areas A and C combined.) For example, phonetics are learned intuitively or associatively, at least in the initial stages, as is reflected in infants' repertoires of sounds when they start babbling without meaning. Graphics can obviously be learned only in an environment in which materials are available, but even so, children's first learning will be of the stimulus-response type. At a later stage of cognitive development, such as adult second language learning, learning is no longer necessarily intuitive or associative, but it remains of the stimulus-response type. This type of learning is defensive (Stevick 1974) because the learner pays almost no attention to meaning and the aspects of language that the learner is exposed to are isolated and unrelated to each other, at least in the learner's mind.

In Area D, the two frameworks (Form/Expression and Physical Development and Socialization/External/Rote Learning) are primarily related in the connection between Expression and Rote Learning. However, Area D is concerned with the level of performance, which is reflective (Stevick 1974). (Again, the relationship between Form and External Learning crosses Areas B and D combined.) As in Area B, there is a specific relationship between syntax, morphology, phonology, and orthography in language and physical development and socialization in learning. This relationship is seen when the order in which the linguistic elements are mastered is observed to follow patterns of physical development and socialization. For example, both first and second language learners are much more likely to master the present progressive

morpheme, *-ing*, before the past tense morpheme, *-ed*, because initially their learning is so closely tied to their present activity. It is only later that they are free to talk about the past, by which time language development may no longer be so closely tied to physical development and socialization.

In summary, in Areas C and D, language skills can be analyzed and isolated into units which can best be acquired mechanically, through drill and repetition. Rote learning through substitution drills and other such techniques may be useful in the initial stages of language learning. However, total language acquisition is achieved only when the language is taught in larger, more meaningful units. The methods in Areas A and B are therefore more appropriate. Furthermore, defensive learning leads only to reflective performance. Imitation may be a useful strategy in the acquisition of language, but the mechanical imitation of contextless language forms is a very different phenomenon from the meaningful imitation of larger units of language in context.

### Three Views of Language Learning

Three views of language learning may be analyzed to demonstrate relationships between language and learning.

#### *The Audiolingual Method*

The Audiolingual Method emphasizes rote drill and repetition as a means of language acquisition. With specific reference to the Audiolingual Method, Bolinger noted:

If language is a set of habits and learning is essentially a process of conditioning, then the apparatus of drill and reinforcement becomes the logical way to teach. (1972:24)

Advocates of the Audiolingual Method espouse that students have learned a foreign language when they have "within a limited vocabulary mastered the sound system . . . [and] made the structural devices . . . matters of automatic habit" (Fries 1945:3). This leads to the view that "the single paramount fact about language learning is that it is . . . the formation and performance of habits . . . the acquisition of non-thoughtful responses" (Brooks 1964:49 and 62). In other words, learners are not required to understand what the teacher expects them to repeat. Rather, it is possible for them to learn defensively and perform reflectively

merely to satisfy the teacher, not themselves. Therefore the view of language advocated by the Audiolingual methodologists falls into Area D, as does the view of learning. This congruence between view of language and view of learning probably accounts for the relative success of the Audiolingual Method in the earliest stages of language learning, such as mastery of the new sound system, and should suggest a place in our teaching for the occasional use of mechanical drills for assisting our students to master certain language forms. However, it should also be clear that the Audiolingual Method is inadequate if the ultimate aim of language teaching is for our students to acquire near-native communicative competence in the target language.

#### *The Cognitive Code Approach*

The Cognitive Code Approach attempts to compensate for the inadequacies of the Audiolingual Method by giving more meaning to the sounds being produced (language). Instead of being taught (inductively) the patterns of the language through repetitive practice drills, students are taught the rules of the language and how to use them to consciously and deductively analyze the language. Although at first this might suggest a different view of language than the Audiolingual Method, they are similar. In both methods the student sees the language as

a vast set of sounds and words and rules and patterns that are  
to be transferred from the teacher or the textbook into (or onto!)  
the mind of the student. (Stevick 1974:2)

In other words, in terms of view of language there is very little difference between the two methods, but the difference comes in view of learning. In the Cognitive Code Approach, learners are to understand what they are being asked to do. The focus is not on rote but on meaningful learning, involving the active integration of new material into the learners' cognitive structure (Chastain 1976).

Theoretically, then, the students should be able to move to productive performance, but in many cases this is an impossible result to expect from defensive learning. Thus, there is not the same congruence between the view of language and the view of learning in the Cognitive Code Approach as in the Audiolingual Method. While the view of language in the Cognitive Code Ap-

proach falls into Area D, the view of learning falls into Areas A and B. Only when the teacher includes some activities aimed at developing the communicative competence of his/her students (skill-using activities as opposed to simply skill-getting ones, see Rivers 1976) does the view of language cover Area B in addition to D. Nonetheless, the Cognitive Code Approach makes teachers aware of the need to encourage students to understand the material that is to be learned.

### *Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning*

Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning has moved towards guaranteeing that learners understand all material that is to be learned by allowing students to express their own ideas. This is usually done in the early stages by translating from the first language to the target language. The kind of translation involved is different, however, from that accepted in the Cognitive Code Approach, (which resembles the traditional Grammar/Translation method) because the greatest emphasis is on language as communication, rather than on the rules of the language. The rules of grammar arise out of the realization that communication is subject to some internal form or order, which is basic to adequate communication. This suggests that the view of language advocated by Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning covers all four areas of the language framework, A, B, C, and D. In the same way, the view of learning covers all four areas of the learning framework, A, B, C, and D. It emphasizes the cognitive role in the acquisition of a new language by stressing the need for "inner-directed learning" (Curran 1972). A great deal of attention is also paid to the need for positive affect in the language classroom if learning is to be receptive and not defensive. Curran is also aware of the need for socialization into the target language community and the "severe social adaptation" (1976:20) this may require in the learner. Finally, physical development is not ignored either, as is clear from the analysis of learning into stages corresponding to normal human development. Thus, there is clearly a congruence between the view of language and the view of learning in Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning, as there was in the Audiolingual Method. But in this case, it would appear that Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning is more comprehensive in its approach to language learning and teaching

than either the Audiolingual Method or the Cognitive Code Approach. Thus, it is easy to concur with Rogers who states:

Significant learning combines the logical and the intuitive, the intellect and the feeling, the concept and the experience, the idea and the meaning. When we learn in that way, we are whole.  
(1983:20)

### Conclusion

As a result of this discussion, a number of areas call for further research. First, research may clarify the relationship between each aspect of the language and learning frameworks with a view to specifying the teaching techniques that are likely to be most effective in mastering each aspect. Secondly, it might be possible to test empirically the implication that a method which evidences a congruence between language and learning views is likely to be more effective in achieving its objective than one which does not show such a congruence. Ultimately, a theory of language teaching will be useful in three areas: research, instructional design, and teacher education (Klauer 1985). Finally, this discussion hopes to make language teaching more effective by encouraging language teachers to explore the relationship between language and learning, and its implications.

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## Using Authentic Video Materials in the Language Classroom

Kathleen Kitao

In recent years, teachers and administrators in language programs have been very interested in the use of video and many schools have invested in video equipment and teaching materials. Unfortunately, this equipment is often unused or underused because teachers do not have appropriate teaching materials or do not know how to use video materials. This is especially true in the case of authentic materials such as movies and television programs made by and for native speakers. In this paper, I will discuss some reasons for using video, some potential problems with video, and how to use authentic materials.

### Advantages of Using Video

There are a number of reasons for using video in the language classroom. The authentic visual context provided by video materials is helpful in comprehension.

The fact that words have meaning only in context has become a cliché. Unfortunately, the meaning of context in the cliché sometimes refers only to the sentence in which the word occurs. But context involves the relationships between the speakers and objects and actions and noises that are communicated along with the words themselves. (Fanselow 1980:152)

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Kathleen Kitao taught oral English and composition at Doshisha Women's College from 1980-1985. She is a co-author of several reading textbooks published in Japan and the United States, including *An American Sampler*, *American Holidays*, and *Enjoying America*. She is currently a graduate student in the communication department at Michigan State University.

In a face-to-face interaction, the speaker assumes a shared context, including things that both the speaker and listener can see. If both the speaker and listener can see an object, they are likely to use a pronoun to refer to it. In such interactions, the verbal and non-verbal channels supplement and reinforce each other, and the situation reinforces both. If only the verbal channel is used, the message must be artificially explicit, and stress or intonation exaggerated. In using audio tapes, students do not practice interpreting the non-verbal channel and do not receive the additional information that it normally provides. In using a video tape, this artificial explicitness is not necessary (though it is true that even video materials are not entirely authentic in that they err slightly on the side of explicitness) (Willis 1983:30-31). Non-native speakers tend to be more dependent on visual clues than native speakers (Willis 1983:29); therefore, listening without a visual context is particularly difficult for non-native speakers.

Narratives, that is, movies or television programs with a plot and characters, are effective for presenting material in context. They give language a context beyond the visual. As the narrative progresses, students build up a background knowledge of the situation and characters. Comprehension becomes easier because the background gives a better understanding of the situation and a basis on which to predict what may happen (Rost 1983). The visual context also allows students to explore the whole communication process, including emotions and attitudes, gestures and other forms of non-verbal communication (Sugimori 1983:19).

Another important advantage of video is that it motivates students. In Japan, even after several years of studying English, few students have used English for real communication. English is studied in the classroom with little relevance to the students' world. However, most students like movies or TV programs, and using English to understand them gives students an opportunity to use English in a meaningful way. Another reason that video motivates students is that it brings "real life" into the classroom and therefore has an immediate impact that an audio tape lacks. Although television or movies are not exactly like real life, they are similar because the social interactions which occur in real life speech are present. The dialogue sounds like real speech, with natural pronunciation and varieties of dialect and register (Schaepe 1983). The dialogue also demonstrates the interaction between the

verbal and non-verbal channels and the interaction between communication and context.

### **Potential Problems with Video**

Video is not appropriate in every situation however, and in some cases there are disadvantages to using it. One disadvantage is that students associate video with entertainment. Although this motivates them initially, they may at the same time be inclined to sit back and expect to be entertained. Also, the initial advantage of motivation will be lost if, for example, the material is too easy or too difficult or is not interesting to students.

Another disadvantage is that video is difficult to pace. The teacher must be especially sensitive to the reaction of the class in order to avoid moving too quickly or too slowly. Trying to cover too much material in one session will result in a low level of comprehension, while moving too slowly or repeating the material may cause boredom.

In some situations, other media offering a visual component can be used more effectively than video. While video permits synchronization of sound and pictures and does not require a darkened room (unless a large screen TV monitor is used), the images projected by overhead and slide projectors are larger and clearer. With overhead and slide projectors, it is easier to control the pace of the material and to point things out on the screen.

### **How To Use Authentic Materials**

Once a teacher has decided to use video materials, there are several factors to consider, for example, how to choose materials, how to design support materials, and how to use the materials in class. The following sections deal primarily with movies, but the principles discussed here and the suggestions for designing materials might also be applied to other types of video materials, such as commercials, segments from news broadcasts, documentaries, and talk shows.

#### *Choosing Materials*

The material chosen should be interesting to the students. If possible, students should be asked what they would like to use. This will exploit the natural motivation that video provides and also, as mentioned above, will allow students to use English to

do something that they want to do, that is, understand the story. It is difficult to make generalizations about what students like, but many female students like romances, while most people like mysteries. Action-adventure movies are also popular, but in some cases, students may be able to understand much of the plot without having to listen to the dialogue. Comedies may be difficult for students to enjoy because humor is often hard to understand in a foreign language.

The material chosen should be neither too difficult nor too easy. If students understand very little, they will be frustrated; if they can understand the material easily, they will not be challenged (Schaepe 1983). However, the students' comprehension will depend not only on the difficulty of the video material itself but also on the quality of the support material, that is, the vocabulary lists and exercises that help students comprehend the material. Even high school students can understand authentic material, such as a movie, if it is well-chosen, presented properly, and supported by good exercises (Schaepe 1983). I used *The Miracle Worker*, a movie about Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan, with a class of second-year students at a women's junior college. This movie works well with "false beginners" (students who have studied English for a long time but have great difficulty actually using it) or with students who have no experience using authentic video. The language is not particularly difficult, and many students are familiar with the story in a general way, even though few of them have seen the movie. However, it may not be challenging enough for advanced students. I used *Psycho* with the same class, and, though it is slightly more difficult than *The Miracle Worker*, students were able to understand it fairly well. The Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys television series or *Little House on the Prairie* may also work well at this level. While *Gone with the Wind* is a long movie, it is not especially difficult. It would be a good movie to use with more advanced students who could cover large sections of it in each class, or alternatively, with intermediate students as a series of isolated scenes. Other movies that might work well with more advanced students include *The Sting* and *Twelve Angry Men*.

It should be easy to divide the material into short segments. I have found that five to ten minutes of video can be covered in a single ninety-minute class, depending on the ratio of action

to dialogue in the scene and the students' level of comprehension. Trying to cover too much material in one class will often result in low comprehension and frustration (Schaepe 1983).

The material should have a balance between action and dialogue. For example, using a video in which many of the scenes are static, with relatively little use of interaction between verbal and non-verbal channels of communication, has little advantage.

Slang, idioms, and poor grammar are things that students will encounter in speaking to native speakers (Skirble 1979), and teachers should not worry too much about them, although it may be a good idea to point them out as such.

### *Designing Support Material*

Once suitable material has been chosen, the teacher should select the scenes to be used. Unless the students are advanced, it is probably not possible to use every scene from a movie in one semester. It is best to choose all of the scenes to be used before starting to write the support material since the aspects emphasized in a particular scene will depend in part on the background information students will need in the episodes that they will see later. It is important not to lose sight of the plot because understanding the plot is a component of comprehension. Scenes that advance the plot (rather than scenes that mainly develop characters) tend to be more interesting and easier to understand for students whose listening ability is weak.

It is often necessary to give students a list of new vocabulary items which appear in order to help them understand the material. There are various ways of handling this. Students can be given a list of words and their definitions. Alternatively, exercises such as matching, multiple choice, or finding the definition of a word as it is used in a particular sentence, can be given. If the list of difficult words is long, it is a good idea to give it to students in advance, so that they have time to look it over before watching the episode in class.

When choosing the words to define, it might be helpful to start with a list of words that the students are expected to know, and then define words that are not on the list, as well as words or expressions that have special or unusual meanings in the context of the scene being viewed. (See Okutani for a 5000-word list or Proctor et al. for a 2000-word list.) If the students are not familiar

with contractions, it may be necessary to include them on the list. It is not usually necessary to define words that are not important to understanding the main idea, since the emphasis should be on broad understanding rather than on the meanings of individual words.

Sometimes it is necessary to give the students background information before they see the episode itself. This should include relevant information from scenes that were not covered in the classroom, cultural points, explanations about new characters that appear in the scene, and their relationship to the characters that have already appeared. This background information is important in helping students with comprehension. If a piece of background information is missing or if the students do not understand the relationship between a new character and previous ones, they may have difficulty understanding what is going on in the scene. As with the vocabulary lists or exercises, it is often helpful to give students the background information in advance.

As a rule, it is best to give students a focus each time they watch an episode. One technique for the first viewing of a scene is to give students True/False questions that they can answer using only visual information. This helps familiarize students with the events that take place in the episode and allows them to concentrate on the dialogue itself in later viewings. A variety of questions can be asked, including questions about the emotions of different characters or about the events that students can understand without comprehending the dialogue.

For the second and third viewings, questions can cover the content of the episode. In my experience, multiple choice questions are best for this segment, unless students are advanced. Multiple choice questions allow students to concentrate on content without worrying about production. These questions can be divided into two types: questions that have explicit answers in the episode and questions whose answers are only implied. For intermediate students, it may be helpful to divide the two types of questions into separate sections. This allows students to make sure they understand the explicit content of the episode before they are required to deal with the implied content.

Another type of exercise that can be used is dictation, if facilities are available for students to make individual audio recordings. All or part of an episode can be transcribed, and blanks left for

students to fill in. Since the emphasis should not be on understanding individual words, but rather on the overall meaning, it is best to choose new vocabulary words or words and phrases on which the main ideas hinge. This type of exercise can give students practice in listening for and understanding reductions and contractions.

It is a good idea to conclude with an exercise that summarizes the episode as a whole. A cloze exercise of a summary of the scene is one way of accomplishing this. Single words, phrases, or entire sentences can be left blank. In this regard, it is important to note that there are two types of cloze exercises. In the classic cloze, blanks replace words at certain intervals, often every fifth or sixth word. In a modified cloze, blanks replace key words or phrases. The latter type is better for emphasizing content. Another type of exercise is an organization exercise, in which students arrange a list of statements in the order that they occurred in the scene. Later, students can be asked to write a summary of the episode, using the content questions as a basis.

In some cases, homework, such as a supplementary reading, a composition, or a report, based on the episode can be assigned. If appropriate, students can be asked to predict what will happen next or how a particular problem will be resolved. When they see the next episode, they can compare what they predicted with what happens. This stimulates interest because it gives students an "investment" in the content of the next episode (Bamford 1983).

Of course, this is only a partial list of exercises that can be used with video material. These exercises emphasize comprehension of the main idea and an understanding of the plot as a whole. If the goals of the class include learning about functions or gestures, for example, other types of exercises would be appropriate.

#### *Using Video Material in Class*

The teacher can begin the class by giving a brief introduction to the content of the episode and letting students know what is expected of them. It may be a good idea at this point to read the list of vocabulary words aloud; otherwise students may not recognize the words when they hear them in the episode. Before letting the students watch the episode, it is best to tell them the questions they will be expected to answer after that viewing. Giving them an idea of what the episode will be about can improve students' comprehension of the material (Cervantes and Noji 1984).

"Those situations in which we listen best even as native speakers are those in which we want to listen and in which we have something meaningful to listen for" (Snow and Perkins 1979:56). Yet, language students are often expected to listen to material without any purpose and without knowing what to expect.

After reviewing the answers to the vocabulary questions, the teacher should play the episode one or two more times, and give the students time to answer the comprehension questions. For weaker students, it may be helpful to discuss the questions that have explicit answers in the scene before they attempt to answer the questions that require them to make inferences and draw conclusions. Lastly, students should work on the cloze or organization exercises. If students depend too much on the previous exercises in order to complete the final summary exercise, it may be better to require them to do it without referring to the previous exercises.

After showing the individual episodes of a movie over the course of a semester, I use one class period to show the entire movie, including the scenes that have not been covered in class. I feel that this is useful in cases where the movie has been seen over a long period of time because it helps students grasp the story of the entire movie.

## APPENDIX

This is an example of a lesson that I designed for *The Miracle Worker* for students in a women's junior college. I covered it in seven ninety-minute lessons. Following are the exercises designed to be used with the first episode. In this scene, Annie arrives at the Keller home and is introduced to Helen's family and then to Helen. In addition to the exercises here, there was a dictation exercise, where students filled in blanks in a transcription of the dialogue.

## The Miracle Worker—Episode 1

*Vocabulary*

Match the words on the left with their definitions on the right.

- |                                   |                                                    |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. ____ teens                     | a. pleasant trip                                   |
| 2. ____ suitcase                  | b. the finest parts                                |
| 3. ____ flowers (of civilization) | c. on an upper floor                               |
| 4. ____ agreeable journey         | d. a big box for holding clothes while traveling   |
| 5. ____ trunk                     | e. a flat box for carrying clothes while traveling |
| 6. ____ upstairs                  | f. a light, gentle wind                            |
| 7. ____ breeze                    | g. the years of life from 13 to 19                 |

*Characters*

Helen Keller—a blind, deaf child

Katherine (Katie) Keller—Helen's mother

Captain Arthur Keller—Helen's father

James (Jimmy) Keller—Helen's half-brother

Annie Sullivan—a woman who has come from the North to be Helen's teacher

Viney—the Keller's maid

*Background*

It is 1887. Captain and Mrs. Keller live in the state of Alabama, in the southern part of the United States. They have a blind, deaf daughter named Helen. They have many problems with her. They write to a school for blind people in Boston. They ask the school to send them a teacher for their daughter. The school sends Annie Sullivan, one of its former students who has recovered her sight. Annie has just arrived on the train. Mrs. Keller and Jimmy met her at the train station and are bringing her to the Keller home, which is called Ivy Green.

*Visuals*

If the statement is true, write "T." If it is false, write "F."

- \_\_\_ 1. The Kellers live in the city.
- \_\_\_ 2. Annie seems happy to arrive.
- \_\_\_ 3. Captain Keller comes out of the house to greet Annie.
- \_\_\_ 4. Annie lets Captain Keller carry her suitcase.
- \_\_\_ 5. Helen has light brown hair.
- \_\_\_ 6. Helen wants to open Annie's suitcase.

*Multiple Choice Questions*

Choose the correct answer.

1. What does Mrs. Keller ask Annie?
  - a. how old she is
  - b. where she is from
  - c. where her family is
  - d. why she came to Alabama
2. Captain Keller greets Annie by asking her if she had \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. a pleasant trip
  - b. money for her trip
  - c. any brothers or sisters
  - d. anything to eat on the train
3. What does Annie want to do?
  - a. rest
  - b. see Helen
  - c. have something to eat
  - d. return home to Boston
4. Why is Mrs. Keller letting Annie use the upstairs corner room?
  - a. it is close to Helen's room
  - b. it will be the warmest in the winter
  - c. it is closest to the dining room
  - d. it is the coolest in the summer
5. Why does Annie take the suitcase from Captain Keller?
  - a. she is afraid he will break it
  - b. she wants to show how strong she is
  - c. she wants to be polite
  - d. she has something in it for Helen
6. Annie lets Helen know she is there by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. touching her hand
  - b. speaking to her
  - c. dropping the suitcase
  - d. touching her face
7. Helen feels Annie's face because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. she is angry at Annie
  - b. that is the only way Helen can "see" people
  - c. she already knows Annie
  - d. she likes Annie
8. Helen wants to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. wear Annie's hat
  - b. open Annie's suitcase
  - c. hit Annie's suitcase
  - d. go to her own room

9. By taking Helen's hand and hitting the suitcase and then raising Helen's hand, Annie is trying to \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. show Helen who she is  
b. show Helen she likes her  
c. teach Helen to hit the suitcase and raise her hand  
d. teach Helen to imitate her
10. Helen carries Annie's \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. coat  
b. hat  
c. suitcase  
d. glasses

*Cloze Exercise*

Fill in the blanks.

Annie and Jimmy and Mrs. Keller arrive at the Keller home. Captain 1 \_\_\_\_\_ meets them and welcomes Annie. Annie wants very much to 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_, but Helen is 4 \_\_\_\_\_ there yet. Mrs. Keller tells Annie that she will have the 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 \_\_\_\_\_, because it gets the 8 \_\_\_\_\_ in the summer. Captain Keller tries to carry Annie's 9 \_\_\_\_\_, but she takes it away from him, saying that she has something in it for 10 \_\_\_\_\_. Helen comes out of the house, and Annie lets Helen know she is there by dropping her 11 \_\_\_\_\_. Helen wants to open Annie's suitcase, but first, Annie has her 12 \_\_\_\_\_ the suitcase twice and raise her 13 \_\_\_\_\_, in order to teach Helen to imitate her. Helen takes the suitcase and goes in to the house.

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## **An American Teacher in Kiev: Impressions of English Education in the U.S.S.R.**

*Ellen Dussourd*

In the fall of 1982, I was a participant in the American Field Service's U.S.-U.S.S.R. Teachers' Exchange Program and taught for ten weeks at the Kiev State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages. The experience of teaching at a Soviet teacher-training college was a valuable one for me from many points of view. In this article I would like to discuss my experience from both the professional and personal standpoints. First of all, I will outline the exchange program, my responsibilities as a visiting teacher, the Institute curriculum and some general impressions of English education in the Soviet Union. I will also describe two experiences I had watching this educational system at work: a Suggestopedia class which I observed and a special English school which I visited. From the personal standpoint, I will focus on my lifestyle in Kiev, my overall impressions of Soviet life, and Soviet impressions of Americans and their way of life.

### **The Exchange Program and Participants' Responsibilities**

There were six Americans participating in the exchange. Their backgrounds were varied, but all had studied Russian. While not necessary for teaching at the Institute, some proficiency in Russian was required of program participants. Three of the Americans spent five weeks each in Moscow and Leningrad. There they taught in the special English schools where Soviet children begin studying

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Ellen Dussourd has an M.A.T. (Master of Arts in Teaching) in ESL and French from the School for International Training, and a B.S. in French from Georgetown University. As a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer, she taught EFL in Cameroon for two years. She is currently teaching in the Businessmen's Program at the Language Institute of Japan.

English in the first grade, as opposed to the fourth. The other three, including myself, spent the entire ten weeks at the Kiev State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages.

The Kiev State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages trains future English, French, Spanish, and German language teachers as well as providing in-service training for language teachers who are currently teaching. The course of study for prospective language teachers is five years and the students enrolled are recent graduates of Soviet secondary schools. The in-service training, which is called the "refresher course," lasts one semester. Soviet teachers are required to take four-month refresher courses every five years. The teachers in the Institute refresher course had been granted leaves from their jobs to spend the fall in Kiev brushing up their English. The refresher course participants, most of whom were women, ranged in age from early twenties to late fifties.

Our primary responsibility in Kiev was to give lectures on American life and institutions. Our ten weeks were divided into five segments. During the first two weeks, we taught teachers in the refresher course. There we were requested to lecture on "American Geography," "American Customs, Habits, and Traditions" (which was interpreted as customs relating to holidays), "American Education," and "Shopping." We were also asked to teach two short stories, Somerset Maugham's *The Social Sense* and Salinger's *For Esme—With Love and Squalor*. We spent the second two weeks with the fourth-year students. Again, we were asked to lecture on geography, holidays, and education, as well as "American English." The fifth week was spent with the third-year students; the topic for the entire week was education. After that, we were in the fifth-year department for three weeks and the refresher course for another two weeks. During the last five weeks, we lectured mostly on topics of our choice, including "American Indians," "Language Teaching Methodology," and "American Cultural Patterns."

Generally speaking, the members of the Institute faculty were quite flexible in dealing with the foreign teachers. They suggested topics but, if we were not comfortable with those topics, we were free to substitute our own. In the fifth-year department, for example, we were first presented with a very ambitious lecture schedule, consisting of two new topics per day. However, like so many other schedules presented to us, it was changed so much

that, in the end, it bore no resemblance to the original one. Though a member of the Institute faculty was present every time we lectured, no one ever interfered with our choice of topics. The previous year, however, a participant on the exchange attempted to lecture on gay rights. The faculty member present interrupted her speech and asked her to change her topic.

### Curriculum at the Institute

Future teachers of English at the Kiev State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages devote most of their time to intensive English study (see Appendix for an outline of the Institute curriculum). In their first two years they also take general liberal arts courses, such as Latin, Philosophy, and Psychology. Their study of teaching methodology begins in the third year and, in the fourth year, the students do their practice teaching.

The English Department is divided into five sub-departments: Phonetics, Grammar, Lexicology, Stylistics, and Practical. Practical classes seem to correspond to conversation classes. They are formed during the first year at the Institute. Each consists of ten students who remain together for the entire five years of Institute study. The Grammar section is further divided into Practical and Theoretical Grammar courses. For the most part, the study of English seems to be about the language. In a Practical Grammar class which I observed, for example, the students were studying grammar rules and applying them in written exercises. Similarly, in a Theoretical Grammar class, they were analyzing English according to case grammar.

Unable to observe Methods courses first-hand, I obtained information about them in a meeting with the Assistant Chairman of that department. The Methods program, which the students begin in their third year, consists of both theoretical and practical components. The theoretical component lasts for a year and a half and concludes with a comprehensive examination. This component is divided into three courses: 1) General Methods, 2) Special Methods, and 3) Aims, Contents, and Teaching Aids. It is taught in Russian and consists of about two-fifths lecture and three-fifths seminar. During the seminars, the students recapitulate the lectures, carry out practical tasks, and give demonstration lessons.

During the General Methods course, students are exposed to methods such as Grammar-Translation, Direct Method, Audio-

lingual, Audio-Visual, Suggestopedia, and Gynopedia, which involves the use of hypnosis. The students are given the history of each method, together with a description and a critical analysis. The critical analysis is last. At this time, the advantages and disadvantages of each method are discussed.

The Special Methods course deals specifically with problems that may arise in teaching English to speakers of Russian. Students are taught the areas of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar which can be expected to pose problems for their students, and how best to overcome those problems. For example, they are taught how to introduce new sounds and how to use exercises (of the tongue, for example) to help students reproduce those sounds. The course entitled "Aims, Contents, and Teaching Aids" seems to be primarily a techniques course. It focuses on specific classroom activities to be used in teaching English. It also deals with the students' aims in studying English and, bearing that in mind, ways to best impart to them the skills they will need.

After completing the Theoretical Methods component in the fourth year and passing the comprehensive examination, the students do their practice teaching in English at the beginning and intermediate levels. Together with the members of the Practical class from their English Department, they go to a rural school where they live and teach together for six weeks. Being with the same classmates they have had for five years seems to greatly enhance their practice-teaching experience. In the fall of their fifth year, the students do practice teaching in English at the advanced level and French, Spanish, or German, depending on what their second language is, at the beginning and intermediate levels. This second practice-teaching experience lasts four weeks.

### **Suggestopedia Class**

During our stay in Kiev, we had two opportunities to observe Suggestopedia in action. The Institute boasts a Suggestopedia lab, where intensive, one-month courses are taught to groups from outside the Institute. The Director allowed us to observe a class of engineers throughout the month. We also saw a film on Suggestopedia. This film features the work of Kitaigorodskaya, who studied under Lozanov and was teaching at Moscow State University. The film follows a French course and a Russian course from Day 1 to Day 20. The constant use of translation in these courses makes the film accessible to a much larger audience.

In keeping with Suggestopedia theory, the students in the film and at the Institute took on new identities for the duration of their courses. This was to encourage them to let go of their inhibitions, and to relax and learn freely. They also engaged in tasks, such as matching cards to complete sentences, and performed in numerous skits, which were accompanied by a generous use of outlandish props. In the movie they took part in such diverse activities as: playing "Charades," throwing a beach ball at one another, completing crossword puzzles on the blackboard, and playing guessing games with cards. At the Institute, students made telephone calls on a gigantic, plastic telephone and mingled to find matching sets of luggage (each piece was drawn on a card). They also engaged in "play," such as circle games ("I'm a tailor, I'm a sailor, I go out") and songs, which they sang in a circle while holding hands.

To build up the students' confidence in their ability to learn a language, only positive reinforcement was given and the students were encouraged to work together. Learning languages was seen as a collective effort, and the cooperation and support of the group was considered essential to the success of each member.

There was also constant use of translation. When the teachers read the dialogues, they would read a sentence or passage and then whisper the translation. During these readings, Kitaigorodskaya employed a great deal of paralinguistics, such as exaggerated facial expressions and gestures. Pronunciation, however, was taught solely through imitation and the goal was as close an approximation as possible. Kitaigorodskaya also used a great deal of drill and repetition, both individual and choral, in her teaching. In general, her teaching was characterized by extensive use of drama and a high level of energy.

### Special English School

In Kiev we visited one of the special English schools where the children begin studying English in the first grade, as opposed to the fourth. While interesting and informative, our visit appeared to be staged from the time we arrived until the time we left. We were met by three tenth-form students, who greeted us with "Welcome, dear guests" and ushered us off to the alumni meeting hall, where we were addressed by the Headmistress. The Headmistress' speech was in Russian with English translation provided by one

of the teachers. She gave a brief history of the school, described the facilities, and cited enrollment statistics. Lastly, she spoke of the goals and accomplishments of the school and the devotion of the teachers.

The Headmistress was proud of her school and had every reason to be. As our students at the Institute later informed us, it is the "model school" in Kiev, the one to which all foreigners are taken. The facilities were much nicer than those of the Institute, even though it is one of the best in the U.S.S.R. It was almost impossible, for example, to write on most of the blackboards at the Institute. To get the chalk to stick, we had to wet the blackboard first with a damp cloth. The slide projectors could handle only two slides at a time. In addition, we had no ditto, stencil or xerox machines; all multiple copies were made with carbon. As one can imagine, the department secretaries were busy all day long typing multiple copies for class use.

In the special English school, on the other hand, the facilities were quite elaborate. The blackboards were of a high quality and could even be folded in and out. In one classroom, the teacher pushed a button, at which point the screen in front came down, the drapes closed and a cabinet in the back of the room swung open and a carousel slide projector emerged. Besides being a little eerie, it was also unlike anything which was available at the Institute. Other facilities at the special school included a library, an auditorium, a room with gymnastics equipment, language laboratories, and an audio-visual room, complete with video and closed-circuit television. The school also boasted two Lenin museums, one dedicated to Lenin and one to his family. The exhibits were quite elaborate; they had been done professionally and a few were identical to the ones in the Lenin Museum in downtown Kiev.

After our meeting with the Headmistress, we were given the grand tour of the school by some students and a teacher. At each stop, the students delivered prepared speeches and rarely failed to mention how much they loved their school and their teachers. In the Lenin museums, they recounted Lenin's life and that of his family. Though their speeches were prepared, it was obvious when we asked questions that their proficiency was high. They spoke with ease and used fairly sophisticated structures and vocabulary. It was clear that a great deal was expected of them. For

example, the teachers flinched visibly when a student made a mistake, and the students were clearly embarrassed when corrected by the attending teacher. Unfortunately, we could not get an idea of the proficiency level of the student body as a whole.

After the tour, we sat in on two English classes, one first form (seven-year-olds) and the other tenth form (seventeen-year-olds). The first form class was taught by a recent graduate of the Institute. Her lesson, which revolved around classroom objects, family, days of the week, months and seasons, was taught using the Direct Method. The only time she resorted to Russian was to give instructions or to rescue a student who was floundering. The students were active and obviously having a good time. The teacher was a little flustered when they could not answer correctly, but seemed to care more about them than the impression they made on us. The pronunciation and grammar she was teaching were British and almost completely lacking in reductions. For example, they were chorusing to each other, "What/is/this?," "Have/you/a/father?," and "No./I/have/not." This was when I realized what an early start our students at the Institute had received with their artificial and stilted speech.

In the tenth-form class, the students read prepared comments explaining why they loved Kiev. This was followed by a slide show of the city, which the students were supposed to narrate. Their performance as narrators was not impressive and seemed to disappoint the teacher. The next topic was "Heroes of Socialist Labor." The teacher read short biographical sketches of selected heroes and extracted from the text useful expressions and well-turned phrases, which she then wrote on the blackboard. The students were asked to nominate people from their daily lives to be "Heroes of Socialist Labor" and explain why, using the expressions on the blackboard. One student, for example, mentioned his father, a factory worker, and told how he did his work for "love, honor and glory." Finally, the teacher asked the students what they wanted to do in life. The majority said that they wanted to be actors and actresses. At one point during this discussion, the teacher stumped one of her students by asking her if she was going to work only for society or for herself as well. The girl first said that she would work only for society but, when the teacher persisted, decided that she would work for herself as well.

After we observed the classes, the leaders of the International Club gave us a little speech on world peace and friendship and explained the activities of their club. After being presented with club pins, we were asked to sign the guest book, making a few comments about "Lenin's contribution to the world." There was a great deal of emphasis on Lenin in the school. In addition to the two museums, there were framed quotes on the walls about Lenin studying foreign languages. In her welcoming speech, the Headmistress also told us that the children were taught to model their lives after Lenin's.

### General Impressions of Soviet English Education

There appeared to be two tendencies in the Soviet English education system, an emphasis on translation and an emphasis on "scientific research." This emphasis on translation appeared to be present in various educational institutions and at different levels of English education. At the Institute the students do literary translation (which they call "rendering"), from English into Russian or Ukrainian and vice versa. In the special English school, as the teachers told us, the students do military translation. In technical institutes, where many of the refresher course teachers were teaching, the students do a considerable amount of translation in order to acquire a reading knowledge of technical English.

The emphasis for teachers to engage in "scientific research" was evident in the teachers' professional pursuits and in their reaction to my attitude regarding scientific research. Certainly, a few of the refresher course teachers could not believe that I had no interest in pursuing such research. Judging by their reaction, I would say that any teacher who expects to be taken seriously must be engaged in scientific research. As an example of the scientific research being carried out, one of the refresher course teachers was researching expressions such as "asleep, ablaze and afoot" in order to determine their part of speech. Furthermore, a doctoral candidate at the Institute was doing research on intonation in expressions of supposition. She asked two of the participants on the exchange to record texts for her. With the sole exception of passages from Alex Haley's *Roots*, all of the texts she chose were British. When we told her that our reading of British and Black American English (referred to by sociolinguists as Black English Vernacular) could not possibly be considered authentic speech, she was upset but continued to have us record for her.

Regarding the students' proficiency in English, I found their communicative ability to be quite high, especially when one considers that they have so little contact with native speakers and little hope of ever living in an English-speaking environment. Many of the refresher course teachers, for example, had studied English for fifteen years and had taught it for ten or more years. Although we were often the first native speakers they had ever met, they spoke quite fluently, as did many of the fifth-year students. The only problem was that, since their primary model was literature, their English tended to be stilted and dated. One student, for example, asked me if I liked being a "schoolmarm." In one of the refresher courses, the teachers were being taught expressions such as "irresistible fascination." The models presented were "to have an irresistible fascination for a girl, or a hot potato." Naturally, problems arose when they incorporated such expressions into their speech.

All in all, it seemed that the Soviets had overcome many obstacles to achieve amazing results. To the participants on the exchange, their curriculum seemed unnecessarily structured and their methodology overly rigid. And yet, they are producing near fluent speakers. This is even more astonishing when one considers their lack of contact with native speakers and their almost non-existent opportunities to go abroad. In short, they are accomplishing what many language teachers view as impossible—achieving language proficiency exclusively in the classroom.

### **My Lifestyle in Kiev**

During our stay in Kiev, we had a guide, who met us at the train station and was responsible for us throughout the ten weeks. He was a member of the Institute faculty and taught in the refresher course. Though he had never been overseas, his English was impeccable. Indeed, his linguistic abilities were so well-known that he did a great deal of free-lance translating and even served as former U.S. President Nixon's interpreter when he came to Kiev. Our guide's responsibilities were to attend to our various needs and schedule our cultural program. To this end, he took us shopping for whatever we needed upon our arrival, accompanied us on some sightseeing tours, scheduled a dinner in a Soviet apartment on the occasion of the October Revolution holiday, and entertained us in his apartment. In general, he seemed responsible

for us and our actions. If we needed anything or had any problems, he had to deal with them. Though he seemed apprised of our activities and was interested in whom we associated with, he never tried to inhibit any of our activities. All in all, we felt free to come and go as we pleased.

Our dormitory was conveniently located only a three-minute walk from the Institute. The dormitory population consisted of teachers taking the refresher course, Soviet students, foreign students, and foreign teachers. The foreign students, most of whom were Afghan, were studying Russian intensively in preparation for full-time study in the Soviet Union. In addition to the three Americans, there were five French teachers, who were to teach French conversation classes for a year. Unlike the Soviet and Afghan students, who had three roommates apiece, the three American and five French teachers each had single rooms. Not only were our rooms spacious, they were also freshly painted and generously furnished. It seemed that the Americans and French had the best of everything. Each of us had two beds, one desk, one table, one wardrobe, four chairs, three night tables, and brand new blankets, tablecloths, and towels. There were also two brand new refrigerators, one for the Americans and one for the French.

The dormitory, as a whole, was in sadder shape. Though built in 1969, it was under repair. The men's shower room was out of commission for our entire stay. Thus, we were only allowed to shower every other day (odd days for women and even days for men). There were also some problems with the women's shower room; it was not uncommon to find the floor torn up. The walls in the halls were being replastered and repainted. The Institute was using student labor for this project. I was told that that was the only way to get the job done correctly.

The great advantage to living in the dormitory was that we were in daily and constant contact with Soviet students and teachers. The refresher course teachers lived on our floor and we shared a communal kitchen with them. This communal kitchen enabled us to cook for ourselves when we did not want to eat in the Institute cafeteria. Given the refresher course teachers' lack of contact with native speakers and their eagerness to make up for that, we were in great demand. We were often invited to dormitory rooms for four-course meals, to the ballet, to restaurants, to cafés, and even to apartments. While housing in the Soviet Union is

said to be inexpensive, it is also in short supply and often cramped. Once we visited one of our students in his parents' apartment. The apartment consisted of a living room which doubled as a bedroom, a bedroom, a kitchen, and a bathroom. This apartment was inhabited by a family of four. Though the mother was a doctor and the father in the military, they had been on the waiting list for a new apartment for several years.

### **Impressions of Soviet Society**

Living in Kiev and teaching at a state teacher-training college, I experienced Soviet society in a way that most tourists do not. In general, I found Soviet society to contain many surprises. The people I met, most of whom were women and prospective or current language teachers, seemed to sincerely believe they lived in the most enlightened and humanitarian society in the world. At the same time, they tended to view American society as exploitative and decadent. It was not difficult to see how they reached that conclusion. They simply compared their full employment to American unemployment, their free education at all levels to the cost of higher education in the U.S., and their free medical care to the cost of medical care in the U.S. Their conclusion was that the weak and poor are protected under the Soviet system while, in American society, they do not have a chance.

It was fascinating to see how the Soviets had achieved full employment. The formula seemed to have been the massive creation of marginal and unnecessary jobs. Countless elderly people were sweeping the parks and weighing passers-by on sidewalk scales. Street corner ice-cream stands, newsstands, shoe-repair stands, and *piroshki* (a meat or vegetable-filled pie) stands were found on almost every other block. For the most part, these stands were run by elderly people and middle-aged women. In restaurants and theaters, customers were required to check their coats. Armies of middle-aged women stood little more than an arm's distance apart to take charge of these coats. In most stores, it was necessary to stand in three lines to make one purchase. The first was to find out if the item was available and how much it cost. The second was to purchase a receipt and the third was to pick up the item. The cashiers and store clerks were primarily young women.

The price of full employment seemed to be inefficiency and a loss of personal initiative. Numerous people boasted (while

others complained) to me that Soviet workers did not have to work very hard. Others cited the plight of Soviet émigrés in the West, in particular how hard they had to work. The inefficiencies of the system seemed to have spawned an underground economy. One student, for example, ran an underground book-binding business with his brother. Apparently, it took so long to get books bound through the proper channels that his customers had found it necessary to come to him.

Soviet society struck me as quite orderly. The subways were spick-and-span and trains ran every three minutes. The laws against drunk driving were so stiff that, on the few occasions that we were out in a car, the driver refused even a sip of beer. Indeed, the students burst out laughing when one of the program participants mentioned a stiff new law her state had enacted against drunk driving. It required an automatic night in prison for the first violation. The students evidently found this to be light punishment. In Kiev there was little crime that one heard about and almost no fear of walking the streets at night. At most large intersections, there were underpasses so that people did not have to cross the street—and policemen to stop anyone who tried.

Everywhere we went, people assured us of their desire for peace. The day of our arrival in Kiev, we met with the Rector of the Institute. During his talk on Kiev and the Institute, he spoke at length on the destruction of Kiev and the twenty million Soviets who had died during the War. He wanted to impress on us how much the Soviet people knew of war, in contrast with Americans, and that it was an experience they did not want to repeat. It seemed that the government was doing its utmost to keep alive the memory of the war. Everywhere we went there were museums and monuments commemorating those who had died defending the "Motherland." In the special English school, our guides also mentioned "lessons of memory and courage," or visits by veterans to talk of their experiences during the war.

For all this talk of peace, there seemed to be a great deal of emphasis on the military. All Soviet men do military service and Soviet military academies greatly outnumber their American counterparts. In the special English schools, students do military translation. The best-made clothes I saw were police and military uniforms, and the unavailability of essential goods such as batteries and toilet paper made us wonder about the economic priorities of the government.

The most important holidays, the commemoration of the October Revolution and May Day, are celebrated with military parades. As members of the small foreign community in Kiev, we were invited to attend the October Revolution parade (people who are not invited watch the parade on television). Before the parade began, the commanding officers reviewed the troops. At the start of the parade there was a large picture of Lenin, followed by pictures of members of the Politburo. Next the troops marched by, followed by tanks, missile launchers, and other military hardware. At the end of the military parade came the peoples' parade. This was supposed to be a spontaneous display of support for the Party and all it had done for the Soviet people. This display of support, however, did not appear to be enthusiastic.

One recurring claim about Soviet society was that there was no racial discrimination. I wondered if that was indeed the case. Towards the end of our stay, I made the acquaintance of a Congolese student who had already spent four years in Kiev and was completing a degree in Geology. The story he told of Soviet society was quite different. It was a story of insults from passers-by, and mothers who threatened their misbehaving children by pointing out the African student standing nearby. He also told of taxi drivers who slowed down and then sped off when they identified the person hailing the taxi as black, and Soviet parents who refused to attend the marriage of their daughter to an African student.

One Sunday afternoon the Congolese student and I went to the Exhibition of Economic Achievements of the Ukraine. Around 3:00 we decided to eat a late lunch, but none of the cafés and restaurants at the Exhibition would seat us. Though I never knew if this was because of the hour or the Soviet propensity to turn customers away from empty tables, the reaction to our being together seemed decidedly negative. Everywhere we went people stared and glared at us. One woman facing us in a sightseeing boat told us bluntly (in Russian), "I don't want it. You're light and he's dark."

A student recounted to me an article that had appeared in the local newspaper about a Soviet girl who married an African student. According to the article, the African student took her to Africa with him and, after a short time, gave her to his brother. When his brother tired of her, he gave her to another man. This continued until, finally, she was placed in a brothel. At that point,

she appealed to the Soviet authorities to let her return to the U.S.S.R. When they refused, she committed suicide. The student was quite skeptical of the article, and suggested that it was written to discourage Soviet girls from going out with African students.

Our students were particularly interested in how Americans live, how they get jobs, apply to colleges, and raise their children. I spent a great deal of class time discussing the family, and came across some notable differences between the two countries. A few people quoted an expression which gives some insights into the way Soviet parents raise their children. "Soviet parents support their children until they (the children) retire." Due to the housing shortage, there are many three-generation households in the U.S.S.R. Indeed, it is not uncommon for newlyweds to move in with either set of parents. What surprised me though, was the number of refresher course teachers, among others, who admitted to still receiving financial support from their parents. All of them were married and in their thirties or forties.

From all accounts, there was a trend at the time for Soviet youth to marry young, even in their late teens. Judging by the way people reacted to my being single at the age of twenty-six, I would say that this was true. When I asked my students how they could afford to be students and married at the same time, they told me all students received financial aid from the university and that some of them worked as well. Finally, they admitted that their parents helped them. The divorce rate among teenagers was said to be quite high and to have driven the overall divorce rate up as high as 40%. Many people joked about this, saying it was nothing for some people to marry today and get divorced tomorrow.

### **Soviet Impressions of American Society**

Soviet impressions and interpretations of American society were often fascinating. They had heard a great deal on Voice of America concerning all that is done for the handicapped in the U.S. Their reaction was to wonder why there were so many handicapped people in the U.S. Once, while lecturing on holidays, I made the mistake of describing some of the tricks we had played on Halloween. The teacher interrupted my speech in a shrieking voice, "Why is it that Americans love horror so much? Is that why you were not horrified by the massacre at Shatila?" They

seemed to see Americans as a people so numbed by violence on television and horror films that nothing touched them any more.

Soviets receive a steady diet of "information" on the failures and evils of Western, in particular American, society. One evening on television, there was a lengthy exposé on unemployment in France, Japan, and the U.S. Complete with interviews with men-on-the-street and headlines from newspapers, it seemed intended to remind the Soviets of how lucky they were. Among the headlines from the French press were: "Un jeune chômeur se suicide par le gaz" (a young unemployed man commits suicide by gas) and "Une jeune chômeuse s'immole" (a young unemployed woman burns herself to death).

In the special English school we visited, there were framed quotations on the walls from the writings of John Reed, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, and Harper Lee. All of them exposed, in one way or another, the "shameful realities of American life" (Harper Lee). Hemingway's quote concerned "war profiteering" while Dreiser's explained what had moved him to join the Communist Party.

As mentioned, in a few of our classes at the Institute, we taught Salinger's *For Esmé – With Love and Squalor*. The textbook we were assigned to use suggested the following composition topics:

1. Why do all Salinger's characters seek refuge from American reality?
2. *Catcher in the Rye* exposes the seamy side of the American way of life.

In addition, there was the following discussion topic suggestion:

You have a man-to-man talk with an American in which you put in a lot of plain-speaking about the notorious American democracy.

We were also expected to use another text, *A Way to Debating*, as a basis for discussion. This book was a collection of articles on social problems in the U.S. Though none of the authors or magazines' names was cited, the articles were said to have been taken from American magazines. In one article, the American government's alleged policy of genocide (through forced sterilization) against black and Hispanic women was described. We objected strongly to this book and made a point of discrediting it in class discussions. Finally, the English Department decided there was no need for us to use this text in class.

In spite of all the bad publicity the U.S. receives in the Soviet Union, we were well received almost everywhere we went. Certainly, no one shrank away from us in fear. The majority of the people we met were wonderful to us; a minority of "True Believers" made our lives unpleasant. Politics, defined very broadly, was taboo in the classroom, as the teachers and students alike had been instructed before our arrival. Everyone seemed concerned that our stay be a pleasant one and that we return to the U.S. with positive feelings about the U.S.S.R. It was felt that, should politics come up, we would necessarily disagree and then there would be hard feelings.

However, that did not stop politics from coming up altogether. There was a tendency on the part of some students to ask baiting questions. The three most common pertained to unemployment, racial discrimination, and women's salaries in the U.S. There was also a tendency to ask personal questions. "Do you believe in God?" and "Have you ever used drugs?" were two of the most popular.

### **Conclusion**

My experience in Kiev was an unforgettable one. Professionally, I gained insights into the way languages are taught in the U.S.S.R. Naturally, a longer stay would have given me a more accurate view of the level of proficiency of teachers and students alike. It would also have given me a better understanding of the methods and techniques used to teach languages. But it was fascinating to see how the Soviets achieved the results they did despite the constraints they were under. From a more personal standpoint, I was able to gain first-hand impressions of the Soviet people and their society. Though my experiences living in Kiev confirmed some of my expectations, there were also many surprises. These surprises will always be the most memorable aspects of my experience as an exchange teacher in Kiev.

## APPENDIX

KIEV STATE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE OF  
FOREIGN LANGUAGES

## Course of Study for Prospective Teachers of English

*First Year*

## Phonetics

(articulatory exercises using mirrors and other props, dialogues for pronunciation and memorization, singing for proper pitch and intonation, phonetic transcription and drawing tone-a-grams)

## Grammar

## Home Reading

## Practical

(conversation, writing on various topics, vocabulary building, memorization of idioms and formulaic expressions)

## General Linguistics

## Modern Russian

(evolution of the language)

## Latin

## Psychology

(child psychology)

## History of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union)

## Medical Training

(for girls only)

## Physical Education

*Second Year*

## Phonetics

(mostly practical, deals with intonation and so on)

## Grammar

## Home Reading

## Practical

(uses films, music tapes and so on)

## Pedagogics

(philosophy of education in ancient Greece, the U.S.A., Great Britain, and so on; peer teaching following those models)

## Modern Russian

## Philosophy

## Psychology

## History of the CPSU

## Medical Training

(for girls only)

## Physical Education

*Third Year*

Theoretical Phonetics  
Grammar  
Home Reading  
Practical  
History of the English Language  
Pedagogics  
    (taught in Russian)  
Methodology  
    (taught in Russian)  
Second Language  
    (French, Spanish, or German)  
Physical Education

*Fourth Year*

Theoretical Phonetics  
Theoretical Grammar  
Practical  
Modern English and American Literature  
Stylistics and Lexicology  
Methodology  
    (taught in Russian)  
Second Language  
Culture and Civilization  
Psychology  
Physical Education  
History of the English Language

*Fifth Year*

Theoretical Grammar  
Practical  
Stylistics and Lexicology  
Methodology  
    (taught in Russian)  
Second Language  
Psychology  
Physical Education

## What Am I Doing? Mistaking!

*Thomas N. Tinkham*

The present progressive tense, the *be* + *-ing* form, seems to be a natural choice for introducing action verbs to beginning ESL students. It describes current activities and possesses an immediacy that other tenses do not. Using the present progressive, teachers can actively demonstrate new verbs to their students; they can actually "do" actions as they name them. It is not surprising, therefore, that most teachers who have taught beginning levels of ESL have found themselves at one time or another walking back and forth in front of their students announcing, "I am walking," and even hopping up and down declaring, "I am jumping." Teachers may also, at times, show the students carefully assembled collections of pictures asking the questions, "What is happening?" or "What is he doing?" To expand the demonstration and get students involved, many teachers parade students around their classrooms encouraging them to report their activities using their new verbs.

Clearly, this early use of the present progressive is justified. Teachers can provide their students with visible, somewhat meaningful demonstrations of their new language as it links to action and the immediate environment.

Teacher: Look at me. What am I doing?

Student: You are walking.

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Thomas N. Tinkham is an Assistant Professor of English and Applied Linguistics at the University of Guam where he teaches Developmental English, regular freshman composition, and linguistics. Mr. Tinkham began teaching ESL in the Marshall Islands and taught English as well as developed materials in Bali, Puerto Rico, and Iran before settling in Guam.

Furthermore, students themselves are encouraged to become involved with their new language, matching their sentences with a physical response.

Teacher: What are you doing?

Student: I am sitting.

The other English verb tenses, unfortunately, do not offer such potential for teacher demonstration or student involvement. Demonstrating the simple present is rather easy in the case of *have*, but it becomes a problem with most other verbs. For a teacher to say "I eat breakfast," at three o'clock in the afternoon with no food in sight might be disconcerting for the students. If a teacher takes off his/her glasses and says "I wear glasses," it can be even more confusing. Actions reported in the simple past are also difficult to observe. How can a teacher demonstrate, except by rather elaborate means, that s/he "woke up at 7:00?"

Furthermore, student involvement in actions reported in these single verb tenses does not possess the immediacy it does in the present progressive. In the simple present and simple past, students are removed in both time and space from the events they are reporting and have only knowledge or memory of a physical response. Unless a student's breakfasts are somewhat indigestible, it would be difficult for that student to feel physically involved with the breakfasts that s/he eats every morning, or the one that s/he ate a few hours ago. "I eat breakfast" or "I ate breakfast" just do not possess the immediacy of "I'm eating breakfast."

Because of the pedagogical advantages of the present progressive over other tenses most of the English verbs that teachers introduce to their beginning ESL students are presented in the *be + -ing* form. At a recent ESL conference well attended by representatives of the best known text publishers, this writer checked twelve basic ESL texts and counted nine that introduced the present progressive before either the simple present or past. The most common beginning syllabus was a familiar one: First the verb *be* is introduced with adjectives and nouns, then the present progressive follows with a working corpus of "action" verbs.

The problem with this approach is that students learn the present progressive too well. It has been shown that in learning tasks the first few learning elements or experiences are most clearly impressed upon the learner (Jung 1968:38). This learning phenomenon which could and should be used to our ESL students'

advantage becomes a drawback when teachers begin their instruction in the present progressive tense. This approach may tend to impress upon students the notion that English verbs are preceded by a form of *be* and followed by *-ing*.

The fact is, however, that the present progressive rarely finds application in standard English. Robert Allen reports in *The Verb Systems of Present-Day American English* that from a corpus of 4,800 sentence verbs, only 84 or 1.7% occurred in the present progressive tense (1966:131). Several years earlier, in *American English Grammar*, Charles Fries examined several thousand sentences collected from samples of American personal correspondence but found that the number of occurrences of the present progressive was too small even to "draw any valid statistical conclusions" (1940:185). More recently, the Francis, Kucera analysis of the "Brown corpus" found only 3.09% of the main verbs in the corpus to be progressive (1982:556). There is reason to believe we use the present progressive more frequently in conversation than in writing (Allen 1966/136) but it remains a relatively unimportant tense.

We simply do not use the present progressive very often, but that should not come as a surprise. After all, why should we tell someone what we are doing when they can see for themselves? It is difficult to imagine a situation in which, "I am walking," would sound appropriate. Yet teachers and textbook writers place the present progressive centerstage, in a position of paramount importance within their curriculum, all because the tense seems to be pedagogically practical—easy to teach and easy to learn.

The real problem is not that teachers are devoting "prime time" to a tense their students should rarely use, but rather that as a result of intensive, early exposure, the *be + -ing* form often becomes over-learned and consequently over-generalized to the point where it makes its mark upon other simpler tenses that require neither *be* nor *-ing*. When this happens, teachers at more advanced levels wind up with more than ample reason to complain about the "bad habits" their students have acquired.

The following sentences were used by the writer's advanced ESL students at the University of Guam.

People are always go there.

I was cried.

The price is depends on the quality.

Similarly, *-ing* is often incorrectly added to otherwise correct verbs.

We sit down and watching the other people.

Teenagers who disobeying the laws cause trouble.

These people do not using their brains.

And, even though the use of *be* + *-ing* may be grammatically correct, its use may be inappropriate.

Lots of students are owning their own car.

They do it because they are having a lot of money.

Because he is always knowing the answer.

To substantiate the assertion that ESL students who are introduced to English verbs via *be* + *-ing* clusters are apt to overuse both *be* and *-ing*, this writer undertook a short study of incoming ESL students enrolled in the Developmental English program at the University of Guam. The students included in the study were all Micronesians and almost certainly received their introduction to English through *Oral English*, a series of ESL lessons and texts prepared by Gloria Tate (1966). This program has been the core of ESL instruction in the public schools of Micronesia since 1967 and, consequently, one can reasonably assume that the Micronesian students at the University of Guam began their English education with Book 1 of the Tate series. Book 1 first introduces *be* as a verb and immediately follows with *be* as an auxiliary for action verbs in *be* + *-ing* clusters.

In the current study, samples of free writing were taken from 28 high-beginning students and then analyzed for verb usage. The analysis indicated that the subjects rarely attempted the present or past progressive tenses. Only 1.2% of the corpus of 504 sentence verbs were presented in a progressive form. However, both *be* and *-ing* were frequently encountered as errors. Of the corpus, 7.7% were verbs preceded improperly by a form of *be* and 3.3% were verbs that improperly included the affix *-ing*. Together, errors resulting from the unnecessary inclusion of either *be* or *-ing* accounted for 11% of all sentence verbs.

Nevertheless, how do we know that the early introduction of the present progressive is responsible for these errors? A control group of ESL learners who either were taught from a text that introduces single verbs before *be* + *-ing* clusters or of learners who have "picked up" some English casually would provide a valuable comparison, but unfortunately such a control group is

unavailable to this writer. Another consideration is that verb tenses of the native languages of most of these students, Trukese, Palauan, and Pohnpeian, might interfere with the acquisition of verb tenses in English. However, a quick look at the grammars of these languages suggests that there are no parallel auxiliaries that could be transferred into English. Therefore, although this was a limited study, this writer concludes that the early introduction of *be* + *-ing* clusters may account for his students' heavy and improper reliance on *be* and *-ing*.

What solutions can there be for this overreliance? How can teachers introduce new verbs in a simple, single form rather than as part of a *be* + *-ing* cluster? Asher (1969:17), Krashen (1981:101), and Terrell (1977:325) suggest the early use of imperatives. Initiating ESL instruction through imperatives provides immediacy through "physical response." The immediacy which is inherent in the present progressive is retained, but without the encumbrance of inflections.

Student involvement in their new language is also retained when they use the verbs *have*, *like*, *want*, and *know*. These verbs describe a student's current conditions, yet are used in the simple present tense. Students can be holding a pencil when they say, "I have a pencil." The sentences, "I like her," or, "I want a hamburger," describe current feelings and are sure to promote interest. A student's response, "I know her name," reports his/her immediate knowledge. In all of these cases, students are involved in the context and meaning of their new language, but the verb form they are using is simple with no "helpers."

Even the past tense can be demonstrated in admittedly contrived but nevertheless effective classroom demonstrations. Students can be moved around their classroom to elicit the response, "I went to the door." Corners of the room may become a restaurant, a store, Hollywood, the moon...who knows? With a little imagination, almost any response is possible:

Teacher: What did you do in London?

Student: I met the Queen.

Expanding on such activities, a teacher can capitalize on student involvement in their own real past by asking personal questions leading to simple conversations, for example, "Tell me about somebody you saw yesterday" or "Where did you go after school?"

Finally, in all fairness, the strengths of introducing the present progressive early should not be ignored altogether. The tense remains easy to teach and easy (and sometimes fun) to learn. However, the potential problems created by a reliance on the *be + -ing* form should be dealt with early, before they become petrified into bad habits. The simple present and the simple past should be introduced early, along with, if one likes, the present progressive. Comparisons involving both syntax and semantics of these tenses should be made frequently. Situations or contexts can be set up that require one form, separating and distinguishing it from the others. Even beginning students can quickly learn the differences between "Do you smoke?" and "Are you smoking?" or between "Do you ride the subway to school?" and "Are you riding the subway to school?" After all, students are certainly smart enough to quickly learn that they can say, "I sleep," even though they are wide awake, but they will never be able to say with any meaning, "I'm sleeping." And, as they are learning these distinctions, students will also be learning that English does offer other verb forms that are less complicated and far more useful than the present progressive.

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## The Operator in the English Verb System

John T. Crow

### Introduction

Of all the areas of knowledge that educators attempt to impart to their students, the most complex is surely language. The more that linguists explore the phenomenon of human language, the more they discover its seemingly infinite intricacies. Many current teaching methods acknowledge this complexity by suggesting that language teachers avoid all attempts to break language down into discrete items for instruction; however, there are many instructors who believe that providing a systematic analysis of how a language operates is a useful, if not vital, component of foreign language instruction for adults. There are many instructors who continue to provide rules for their students to guide them in their attempts to analyze the target language and to form viable hypotheses. It is to this sizable audience that this article is addressed.

One tenet is basic to any type of teaching: students are able to learn a small number of rules better than a long list of their applications. The simpler and more general the explanation, the more accessible the operative principles and the more efficient the acquisition process. The English verb system, with its complicated tense formations and permutations, is certainly an area where economy of explanation is particularly crucial.

There exists a concept dealing with English verbal phrases that has been known to theoretical linguists for years, but has been

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John T. Crow received his doctorate in English as a Second Language from the University of Texas at Austin. He is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of English, North Texas State University at Denton, Texas. He is the author of *Vocabulary for Advanced Reading Comprehension: The Keyword Approach* (forthcoming).

largely ignored by texts and teachers alike; R.A. Close refers to this concept as "the operator" (1975). The purpose of this article is to show how the operator functions, unifies, and thereby simplifies a number of verbal phrase manipulations in English: everything from verbal negation or yes/no question formation (beginning level) to negativized adverbial fronting (advanced level) is affected. The following is an explanation of the operator and a partial account of those permutations to which its principles apply.

### The Operator

The operator is defined as the first word in any verb structure composed of more than one word (a non-finite verb form). Any verb structure composed of only one word (a finite verb form) has no operator in its surface structure. There are two general rules that are always applicable:

- A. The operator always carries tense (present, past, or future<sup>1</sup>) and subject-verb agreement inflections.
- B. If an application calls for an operator and the verb form is finite, then the speaker/writer must supply one. Whenever it is necessary to supply an operator in English, DO is used.

The following examples will serve to illustrate the operator:

I was sitting there (*was* is the operator)

I sat there for an hour (no operator)

I must have been sitting there for an hour (*must* is the operator)

I had been sitting there for an hour (only *had* is the operator)

Thus, any progressive, perfect, passive, or modal + verb form contains an operator; any simple present or past verb form does not. Operators are a closed set. The only members are HAVE, BE, DO, and modals. Teachers are advised to avoid using terms such as "auxiliary" or "helping verb" to define the operator as auxiliary verbs often contain more than one word but only the first word is the operator.

### The Operator in the ESL/EFL Classroom

There are several transformation of the verb phrase in English that are normally taught as separate items in a curriculum or treated

<sup>1</sup> Whether or not English has a true future tense is a theoretical argument relevant to linguistics, but not to the classroom.

as disparate areas in textbooks. This approach fails to take advantage of the fact that each of these permutations involves a relatively small set of rules that govern the operator. If this set of rules were to be introduced gradually at the beginning level, all subsequent instruction and learning would become greatly simplified. Several applications of the concept of operator are presented below.

### *Negation*

To negate a verb in English, the word *not* is inserted after the operator, as in the following examples:

I was eating. → I was not eating.

He has been eating. → He has not been eating.

He could have been studying. → He could not have been studying.

As stated in Rule B above, if there is no operator, that is, if the verb is simple present or simple past, then DO is used. In keeping with Rule A above, any inflection for tense or number will be carried by DO, and the main verb will return to its base form, as in:

George goes to school. → George does not go to school.

George went to school. → George did not go to school.

There is only one exception to the above. BE is the only verb that, when used as the main verb in a sentence, does not require the addition of an operator to negate it:

They are/were happy. → They are/were not happy.

Additionally, in British English, HAVE (in the sense of possession) does not require an operator to form the negative, as in:

I have a pencil. → I haven't a pencil.

The amount of information required to explain negative formation in terms of an operator may seem large and rather formidable. The teacher must keep in mind, however, that only the most basic concepts should be presented initially; other aspects can be added on as students become comfortable with the concept of the operator. Once students have grasped the above set of operations, they can apply them *intact* to several other manipulations.

### *Yes/No Question Formation*

Yes/no questions are formed by moving the operator to the beginning of the sentence, as in the following:

John is eating. → Is John eating?

She can speak English. → Can she speak English?

All of the other rules for the operator apply. If there is no operator, DO must be supplied. It carries tense and number with it, as illustrated by the following examples:

You ate a steak. → Did you eat a steak?

He eats with his fingers. → Does he eat with his fingers?

The only exceptions are BE and HAVE (the latter in British English only):

He is late. → Is he late?

He has a pencil. → Has he a pencil? (British English)

→ Does he have a pencil? (American English)

If students have been exposed to the concept of the operator while learning negation, yes/no question formation becomes much easier to grasp. The only additional piece of information that they must learn involves the movement of *not*. If *not* is contracted onto the operator, it moves with it. If it is uncontracted, it remains in place:

He didn't go. → Didn't he go?

He did not go. → Did he not go?

There are, of course, different nuances of meaning associated with each, so the teacher is advised to teach the contracted form first, saving the less common uncontracted form for a later class.

Short answers to yes/no questions are relatively easy to explain if the operator is used. The appropriate response (yes or no) is followed by the appropriate subject and the operator:

Is John eating? Yes, he is.

Did you eat a steak? Yes, I did.

### *WH-Question Formation*

WH-questions (for example, who, which, what) are rather difficult to form in English. Their construction, however, is greatly simplified if one already understands the operator. If the WH-word is already in the initial position, no additional changes occur. This can be seen in the following:

John was eating a hamburger. → Who was eating a hamburger?

However, if the WH-word is not in the initial position, it must be moved to that position and the operator must be moved in front of the subject, thus:

John was eating a hamburger. → What was John eating?

The rules for DO and BE apply as before:

John went home. → Where did John go? (DO)

John was happy. → What was John? (BE)

### *Tag Questions*

Tag questions are formed by repeating the operator at the end of a sentence and reversing it, followed by the subject:

They are going to town. → They are going to town, aren't they?

Mary couldn't have been wrong. → Mary couldn't have been wrong, could she?

The rules for DO and BE again come into play:

John forgot his coat. → John forgot his coat, didn't he? (DO)

He is right. → He is right, isn't he? (BE)

### *Verbal Ellipses*

Many constructions in English allow parts of a verb phrase to be omitted. Such elisions are often accomplished by allowing the word *so* accompanied by the operator to stand for the entire verb phrase, as in the following:

John is reading a book by Hemingway and Mary is reading a book by Hemingway. → John is reading a book by Hemingway and so is Mary.

In the above example, *is* and *so* take the place of the remainder of the verb phrase. All of the rules inherent in the operator concept apply. Note, for example, that DO is used if the above sentence is changed to the past tense:

John read a book by Hemingway and so did Mary.

### *Emphatic Constructions*

There are a number of ways to achieve emphasis in English. One very common way involves stressing the operator in a positive sentence:

Speaker A: Do it again and try your best this time.

Speaker B: I *WAS* trying my best!

Needless to say, all of the rules governing the operator are intact:

Parent : I told you to make your bed!

Child : I *DID* make my bed.

### *Negativized Adverbial Fronting*

Words such as *scarcely*, *not only*, *hardly* and so on are negativized adverbials (Klima 1964). These words can be fronted in English, and, whenever they are, the operator must be placed in front of the subject. The process is exactly like any other operator permutation:

I had scarcely begun when . . . → Scarcely had I begun when . . .

I can not only sing, but also dance. → Not only can I sing, but I can also dance.

### **Conclusion**

Since the operator concept creates one cognitive set of rules (with minor variations) which are applicable to several verb permutations, it is a very parsimonious approach that serves as an excellent first step to mastery of the English verb system. The operator is a valuable tool for both beginning and more advanced classes. If advanced students have not been exposed to the concept previously, the teacher can, in just a few minutes, present the operator, using as examples those structures to which the students have already been exposed (see the appendix for a summary of the operator concept). The concept will then serve as a foundation upon which to build explanations for more complicated verbal transformations.

The teacher must still, of course, utilize exercises and activities that allow the students to internalize the processes involved. However, the operator is certainly a more effective and efficient foundation for explanation than traditional approaches, and should, if utilized properly, facilitate the acquisition of the structures involved.

## APPENDIX

## Summary of the Operator

*Definition:* the first word of a verb (assuming the verb has more than one word).

*Members:* HAVE, BE, DO, and modals.

*Rules:*

1. The main verb (or lexical verb) of a sentence can never be the operator.  
There are two exceptions to this rule:
  - a. The verb BE and
  - b. In British English only, the verb HAVE (meaning "possession").
2. The operator is the only verb form that changes for number (that is, subject-verb agreement) and tense (that is, present, past, or future).
3. If a verbal manipulation requires an operator and one is not present, DO is always used. Rule 2, of course, applies.
4. If *not* is contracted onto the operator, any manipulation that moves the operator also moves the contraction. If *not* is uncontracted, it does not move with the operator.

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## Bright Ideas

### The Alibi Game

*William McOmie*

Imagining a crime and then constructing an imaginary alibi to demonstrate one's innocence can be a very interesting and exciting classroom activity. It also has the advantage of allowing students to practice using several different kinds of language, such as past questions, long or short answers, past narration, hedging answers, hesitating, and making excuses. At the same time it enforces accuracy of recall.

I have used this activity with many different kinds of students, including businessmen studying in an intensive immersion program in English and adult students in regular language classes. I would recommend it for students ranging from lower intermediate to advanced. The activity is designed to last for not more than about an hour. In a class of eight students, for example, the introduction and pair work normally take up the initial twenty minutes and the interrogation lasts for forty minutes, or about five minutes per student.

#### *Setting Up the Activity*

The teacher creates the situation by saying that a crime has been committed and then elaborating thus, "The Director's computer was stolen last night at 10:30 p.m. He thinks a student may have stolen it. He thinks that student may be in our class." After such a statement, the students are generally quite interested in what is going to happen next. In fact, they usually begin to spontaneously form alibis. If the students show real concern, one should be careful to let them know that it is only a game. Otherwise, they may believe that they are indeed suspected of a crime and be offended. The following is an example (in the form

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William McOmie has a B.A. in Psychobiology from the University of California at Santa Cruz and an M.A. in Russian from the University of California at Davis. He has taught EFL in Austria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and is currently an instructor at the Language Institute of Japan.

of a transcript) of how the teacher might actually set up the situation.

Teacher: (to the students in a serious tone) The Director's computer was stolen at 10:30 last night. It was in his office on his desk. He thinks that a student may have stolen it. He thinks that student may be in our class.

Students: (looking surprised) Oh, alibi!

Teacher: That's right. What were you doing at 10:30 last night, Hiroshi?

Hiroshi: Uh, I was in my room...

T: What were you doing? Who was with you? Anyone?

H: Uh, yes, Kazuo was with me.

T: (skeptically) Yes, I see. Alright, well, you had better have a good alibi. Please sit together and make an alibi. (to the class) Everyone was with someone else last night. Tamio, you were with Hideo. Kikuo, you were with Shigeo. Please get together now and make your alibis. You must agree about all the details. We are going to question you later separately. If you do not agree about all of the details, you are guilty.

Student: What do you mean by details?

Teacher: For example, where you were exactly, what you were doing, who was with you, what you were eating or drinking, where you were sitting, what you were talking about, how much you ate or drank, whether you left at any time. Try to include as many details as you can. You have about fifteen minutes. I will be coming around to help you.

### *Creating the Alibi*

The students work in pairs to construct an alibi. The teacher explains that they were together during the time that the imaginary crime occurred and that they depend on each other for an alibi. They then imagine that they were together at a certain place at the time of the crime and proceed to write down various details about the situation, such as what they were doing, what they were talking about, what they were eating or drinking, what they were wearing, whether anyone else was present during the time that they were together, and so on. The students are told that they will be asked many detailed questions about their time together and that if they do not agree about all of the details they will be considered guilty of the crime. It is often necessary for the teacher to supply examples in order for the students to understand what is expected of them. Sometimes they have not agreed upon

details and need further encouragement. If there is an uneven number of students, the teacher might pair up with one of them. Alternatively, the teacher could have three students work together. This would be more challenging for higher students. While the students are creating their alibis, the teacher can circulate among them, offering encouragement, helping with vocabulary or grammar, and correcting mistakes which might interfere with comprehension of their alibis.

### *The Interrogation*

The students are called together into one group and the chairs are placed in a semi-circle around a single table and chair. One of the students from a pair is then sent out of the room and told to wait outside until called back in, generally not more than five minutes, often less. While waiting outside, the partner is questioned about the details of their alibi. The teacher usually takes the lead in the questioning the first time in order to set the pace and give the student just enough time to think about the answers. At first, the teacher asks questions which s/he knows the student is prepared to answer. The other students usually catch on quickly and begin asking questions. If they do not, the teacher can encourage them. During the questioning, the student is not allowed to look at any written answers and must rely on memory alone. When the student has been questioned about the basic points of the alibi, the teacher and the other students begin to ask even more detailed questions about the alibi, for which the student may not have prepared an answer. This is where the real fun begins! The object of the game at this point is to 'trip up' the student by eliciting some details about the alibi which have not been agreed upon. Once this has happened (and depending on the desired pace of the activity), the student is asked to join the group of 'interrogators' and the partner is called in and sits down behind the table. Sometimes the partner begins stating the details of the alibi without any questions being asked, but usually interest is quickly focused on those details which were given by the first student and which are unknown to the second student. There is a moment of suspense as the answers are given. If they happen to be the same as those of the first student, there is usually a sigh of relief from that quarter, and a groan of disappointment from the group of interrogators. However, more than one detail

is usually given so there is a good chance that the second student will give an answer different from the first student, and additional questions are asked with that goal in mind. If the second student gives a different answer, then the two are quickly declared 'guilty' and attention is focused on the next pair. Of course, the more a student can hedge answers to questions s/he is not prepared for, the greater the chance that s/he can escape the 'guilty' verdict. In this way, techniques for evasion, such as pretending not to remember, avoiding direct answers, replying with another question or asking the interrogators to ask his or her partner for the complete details, are encouraged.

Following is a typical (but not actual) transcript of a portion of the interrogation. An actual transcript would contain grammatical and other kinds of mistakes. While the students are narrating their alibis or questioning each other, the teacher should not make any corrections. This would retard the pace and hinder spontaneity. The teacher could take note of errors and then give correction afterwards. Alternatively, a recording might be made and then played back later. This last method is only recommended if the presence of a microphone would not inhibit the students in any way.

Interrogator: Alright, Hiroshi, where were you last night at 10:30?  
What were you doing? Who was with you?

Hiroshi: I was with Kikuo. We were sitting in our room. We were talking about his trip to Hawaii. We were drinking beer and eating peanuts. We were . . .

Interrogator: Hmm, I see. What kind of beer were you drinking?

Hiroshi: Uh, Sapporo.

I: Tall can or small can?

H: Tall.

I: How many did you drink?

H: Two.

I: What about Kikuo?

H: He drank only one.

I: Did you eat anything?

H: Yes, I ate some peanuts and he ate potato chips.

I: Where were you sitting?

H: I was sitting on the bed, but he was sitting on the floor.

I: What were you wearing?

H: Uh, let me see, he was wearing blue jeans and a sweatshirt and I was wearing gray pants and a red shirt.

- I: Was he facing the window or was his back to the window?  
H: ?? Uh, I think he was facing the window . . .  
I: Was he drinking the beer in a glass or from a can?  
H: From the can.  
I: Was he sitting cross-legged or with his legs stretched out?  
H: I can't remember.  
I: You can't remember!! Why not?  
H: No, I'm sorry . . . I had so much to drink . . . I just can't remember.  
I: Where did he put the can of beer when he finished with it?  
Y: ??? Uh, I think he left it on the floor, but I'm not sure.

Usually this activity heats up midway through as the students really begin to get the idea. They begin to ask about all sorts of unexpected details, in the hope of establishing the guilt of other students or of the teacher. The teacher's role can then shift from interrogator to facilitator. S/he needs to control the pace by cutting off questioning at the right time, that is, after enough new details have been given, or when 'guilt' or 'innocence' has been determined beyond a reasonable doubt. Pace is very important and should never be allowed to drag. If interest begins to wane at any point, the pace should be stepped up. The teacher can keep up the pace by asking questions designed to trip up a particularly evasive student, by dismissing a student, by calling in the student's partner, or by calling on the next pair. In the case of a particularly evasive student, the 'verdict' may not be so clear, and the pace should not be sacrificed in quest of a clear 'verdict.'

### Conclusion

The Alibi Game not only encourages accurate narration and attention to detail, it enforces it. It practices a wide variety of questions, and encourages accurate or evasive replies, depending on the stage of questioning. It gives a real reason for asking questions, and giving accurate replies. It creates a situation where the questioner does not know what the answer will be, but where he might definitely want to remember it. It introduces interest and suspense while at the same time giving ample opportunity for language practice. No student has ever failed to be drawn into the spirit of the game and students have generally found it interesting and useful. It is an activity designed to develop both fluency and accuracy and has a potential which I think is difficult to exhaust.

## Ambiguity in the Classroom: There's Nothing To Be Afraid Of

*Carolyn Brown*

Recently, a colleague told me this story: In her class of Japanese businessmen with only basic English skills, one of the students asked a question which led to a relatively lengthy discussion about Japanese attitudes toward foreigners. Although the discussion was not part of her plan, she was thrilled that her lesson had been "interrupted" by an opportunity for spontaneous discussion. Her students, whose limitations in vocabulary, fluency, and grammar would seem to make discussion very difficult, if not impossible, were stimulated by their classmate's question to give their opinions about foreigners. Finally, after fifteen minutes of discussion, the student who had asked the question turned to my colleague and apologized. "I'm sorry to ask that question," he said. "Please continue class." "Don't worry," she said. "This *is* class."

My colleague's story is related to my own. Her student's idea about what a language class should be is similar to my own former belief that everything should be controlled and disciplined in the classroom.

While my colleague was teaching a class emphasizing general speaking and listening skills, I was teaching what is called "Business English Skills" to the same group of basic students. Because I had just begun to teach this class and because I felt that my ignorance of business would impede my students' progress, I was nervous. One day, my students were answering questions that I had written and taped about a graph which charted inflation rates in the U.S. over a ten-year period. In the first months of 1978, inflation rose by ten percentage points, which represented the largest and fastest increase during the ten years. But in the last months of 1978, inflation dropped by four percentage points, which made the net increase in inflation six percentage points for 1978. One of my questions was, "In which year did inflation rise by ten percentage points?" I was surprised and slightly alarmed when my students answered, "None." I interrupted and said,

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Carolyn Brown has a B.A. in French from Davidson College and an M.A. in English Literature from the University of Georgia. She has taught English composition and literature in the United States and is currently an EFL instructor at the Language Institute of Japan.

"But look at 1978. Didn't inflation rise by ten percentage points that year?" My students looked at me in silence, obviously puzzled. Finally one of them politely ventured, "Maybe American system is different."

Unwilling to pursue the discussion because of my fear of giving the class the wrong information, and disappointed in myself for having written a confusing question, I later asked a fellow teacher how he would interpret the question. "I agree with your students," he said. "But what a good question! Did they ask you what the question meant? Did they clarify the question? What an opportunity for 'real' communication!"

He was right. What the question itself meant was suddenly unimportant. I realized that my interpretation of the episode had been all wrong. I had seen the situation as evidence of my own inadequacy. Teachers should always ask unequivocally clear questions, I had thought, and if a question results in the uncertainty and confusion I had seen in my students, class time is wasted and teacher credibility is lowered.

Unfortunately, one of the character traits that sometimes leads people into the teaching profession—a desire to organize and to control situations—can actually hinder teachers from preparing students for life outside the classroom. Whereas I would never have denied my desire to prepare these Japanese businessmen for the rigors of the English-speaking world they would soon face, at the same time, in my controlled and structured classroom, I was protecting them from reality. As my teacher friend told me, my ambiguous question had created a perfect opportunity for my students to "negotiate meaning." They needed to know that the questions and answers of their future would not always be composed by someone wishing at all costs to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty.

Both students and teachers have frequently separated classroom experience from that outside the classroom. Of course, the conditions of the classroom naturally lead to this separation. But often students and teachers are unaware of the extent to which the classroom has become removed from reality. While teachers have professed a desire to prepare students for "real life," with its uncontrollable and unpredictable situations, they have been unwilling to relinquish some of the control in the classroom. To do so, they may feel, is to lower their credibility, to lessen their

authority, or to take away some of the attention that they enjoy. Out of habit or lethargy, students also have hesitated to shift the focus away from the teacher. The controlled, predictable situations which the traditional teacher and student have found in the classroom offer more security than real-life situations. It is natural that teachers and students have been attracted to the disciplined, organized classroom world. But while the teacher may remain in the classroom, often oblivious to its distance from reality, the student must leave this sheltered world to confront the unpredictable real one.

Because the teacher has the power to make the classroom a riskier place, it is his or her responsibility to do so. That is not to say that the teacher should consciously create chaos in the classroom. Certainly organization and clarity are desirable wherever possible, just as they are in the outside world. But we should be less afraid of ambiguity and vagueness. We should welcome both our own and our students' occasional confusion and frustration as opportunities to establish a deeper understanding than is possible without struggle. To include risk and frustration in the classroom is certainly not to damage the trust between student and teacher. Rather, taking risks will remove the false trust that leads to the disillusionment of the student who, upon entering the real world, sees little humor in the joke that was played on him in class.

## Bringing ESL Students to Court

*John Bistolas*

### Introduction

A mock judicial court of ethical law within the ESL/EFL classroom can create an atmosphere which allows students to talk about abstract concepts, present logically formulated arguments, and debate evidence, while they simultaneously employ a variety of language functions. The imaginary court concerns itself with undefined ethical or moral laws instead of legal ones. The courtroom ostensibly frames a discussion. At least three teams are created, representing the defense, the prosecution, and the judicial bench. A preconceived set of expectations, that is, the rules of the courthouse, help to establish a suitable mood. Students are likely to use polite language, confer with co-participants, and use conversation management skills. Finally, a courthouse atmosphere emphasizes the sense of debate and gives the communication process inherent meaning.

A courtroom style debate can be easily devised in the classroom as it involves only three stages: 1) presenting a controversial story; 2) eliciting opinions which require students to take a stance; and 3) setting up the mechanism of the imaginary court. While there are many controversial stories which can serve as a basis for this activity, "The Alligator River Story" (Simon 1976:291) has proved a successful vehicle for debate and will thus be used here for the purposes of this article.

### The Alligator River Story

"The Alligator River Story" is a short narrative involving five characters, all of whom exhibit some form of moral or ethical impropriety.

Once upon a time there was a woman named Abigail who was in love with a man named Gregory. Gregory lived on the shore of a river. Abigail lived on the opposite shore of the river. The river

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John Bistolas has an M.F.A. in English from the University of Oregon and a B.A. in English from California State University at Long Beach. Before coming to Japan, he taught in the Study Skills Learning Center and the Language Arts Department at Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon. He is currently an instructor at the Language Institute of Japan.

which separated the two lovers was teeming with man-eating alligators. Abigail wanted to cross the river to be with Gregory. Unfortunately, the bridge had been washed out. So she went back to ask Sinbad, a river boat captain, to take her across. He said he would be glad to if she would consent to go to bed with him preceding the voyage. She promptly refused and went to a friend named Ivan to explain her plight. Ivan did not want to be involved at all in the situation. Abigail felt her only alternative was to accept Sinbad's terms. Sinbad fulfilled his promise to Abigail and delivered her into the arms of Gregory.

When she told Gregory about her amorous escapade in order to get across the river, Gregory cast her aside with disdain. Heart-sick and dejected, Abigail turned to Slug with her tale of woe. Slug, feeling compassion for Abigail, sought out Gregory and beat him brutally. Abigail was overjoyed at the sight of Gregory getting his due. As the sun sets on the horizon, we hear Abigail laughing at Gregory.

(Simon 1976:291-92)

Although the personalities and the behavior of each character are different, all of them are worthy of contempt for one reason or another. Abigail submits to a sexual liaison in order to get across the river. Sinbad is guilty of exploiting Abigail for his own selfish purposes. Ivan's apathy makes him an objectionable person. Gregory's lack of empathy is a major flaw. And finally, Slug is a physical brute who was subsequently described by a student as "having a strong body, but having a weak mind." Due to the nature of the story, students can easily form opinions about the personalities involved and rank them, as Simon originally intended, "from the most offensive character to the least objectionable" (Simon 1976:290). While the story is told in summary, it provides enough details to allow students to use evidence in their arguments. But it also provides for the important unknown circumstances which require students to consider the realm of other possibilities and motives. If an alternative story were chosen for this activity, the criterion for selecting the story would include the following: 1) the existence of several characters; 2) evidence of flaws, either ethical or otherwise, in the personality of each character 3) enough detail to allow for an argument substantiated with facts; and 4) enough ambiguity to require speculation about motives and alternative possibilities.

*Prerequisites and Objectives*

The classroom activity was used within a community education program comprised of advanced EFL students. The class met once a week for an hour and a half. No formal test scores were available to indicate ability or level, but students had been studying English for a number of years. In general, class members were able to use language to express many notions as long as the ideas were concerned with tangible objects or with action and events. For example, many class members were able to talk about cause and effect relationships, but only in limited areas, that is, in a sentence such as "Miki was late to class because she worked late," in which one action is caused by another. Yet they often demonstrated problems when the conversation turned to abstract subjects or when they were asked to substantiate personal opinions. Therefore, a primary goal in the class was to present activities which would elicit opinions and facilitate conversation about abstract concepts, especially those inherent to interpersonal communication. As the courtroom activity was presented in the fifth week, students had already practiced prerequisite skills: stating opinions, supporting opinion statements with details, defining abstract terms, agreeing and disagreeing, conceding, interrupting, and other conversation management skills. The courtroom debate was therefore presented when students had reviewed the skills and acquired the confidence necessary to defend their own opinions with evidence and to submit their own speculations to others for scrutiny.

The activity was anticipated to meet specific objectives, both notional and functional. In terms of notional language, the activity was anticipated to elicit language for definition, cause and effect, comparison, and probability. In terms of functional language, students were expected to practice agreeing and disagreeing, suggesting, interrupting, stating an opinion, requesting, objecting, and asking for clarification.

*Procedure*

The activity took one forty-five-minute class and one one-and-a-half-hour class. The written text of the story was distributed for students to read at home. Next, the courtroom setting was explained verbally and a written handout was distributed. The structure was explained as follows:

"Alligator River" is a story which raises many social and moral issues, and is thus a rich source for debate. Therefore, let's pretend that we all hold a seat on the court of Ethical Law. As participants in this court, we need to decide if anyone in the story is guilty of committing a moral or ethical crime. Before we can make such a decision, a few questions need to be considered.

1. What is a crime?
2. Why is this a crime? In other words, what in our society has set a precedent to establish this as a crime?
3. Who in the story is guilty of a moral or ethical crime?
4. What, specifically, is the crime? The exact crime that a person is accused of must be well defined.
5. Whose crime is the worst?
6. Which character should be put on trial?

A short discussion ensued in which class members tried to answer the above questions. Students saw a disparity between legal offenses and ethical ones. Therefore, they tended to focus on the moral implications of the incident. In this respect, differences of opinion were clearly evident as each character was guilty of some type of ethical imprudence. Students tended to side with one character or another, showing a natural inclination to defend the actions of the character. Next, a vote was taken in which students selected the character most deserving to be put on trial. In this case, the vote among twelve people ultimately indicted Abigail.

Sinbad: 2

Slug: 2

Ivan: 2

Gregory: 2

Abigail: 3

Undecided: 1

Although the vote was close, it was easy to predict that Abigail would be viewed as reprehensible and arraigned, simply because she is the primary character in the story. She is the only character who initiates action. All the other characters merely react to her. As one student commented, "Abigail is the epicenter of this story," making the analogy to an earthquake.

Once the situation was explained, three teams were created. Those who felt empathy for Abigail volunteered to defend her. Those who thought her guilty of wrongdoing were eager to prosecute her. Several people expressed a more objective opinion, recognizing the many variables in the story; these people volunteered to be judges. While only a few participants did not assume a role voluntarily, they were easily coaxed to one side or the other. The twelve-member class was finally divided into three teams, with four

members on each team. If this activity were used in a larger class, additional students could be placed on a jury, or students could assume the personalities of the characters in the story so that they could be called as witnesses. However, it is important to keep everyone in active roles in order to allow them to interact freely using as many communicative skills as possible.

During the next stage, each group met separately to evaluate the evidence and organize an argument. Each team was supplied with a set of questions to help facilitate discussion within the small groups. Some of the questions are listed below:

*Questions for the prosecution*

1. What crime has Abigail committed?
2. Why is Abigail guilty?
3. What evidence exists to support a verdict of guilty?
4. Who is the victim?
5. Is there a motive?
6. How should this case be argued?
7. In what way is personal responsibility an issue?
8. Is Abigail accountable for her actions? In what way?

*Questions for the defense*

1. Is Abigail guilty of a crime? Is the crime that the prosecution has charged Abigail with really a crime?
2. Are there any victims?
3. Is Abigail solely responsible for the outcome of the story? Or are there other characters who are also responsible? If so, in what way are the other characters responsible?
4. What evidence might the prosecution present? What might be faulty in the evidence?
5. Why should Abigail be set free?
6. What is wrong with the prosecuting team's theory of motive?
7. Are there mitigating circumstances which would prove the innocence of the defendant?

*Questions for the team of judges*

1. What is the definition of a crime in this court?
2. What are the ethical laws of the society which we are supposed to be representing?

3. Has a law been broken?
4. What is the definition of evidence?
5. What evidence or testimony should be allowed?
6. Why will some evidence be disallowed?
7. There are no witnesses who can testify, so how valid is the evidence?
8. Which evidence is biased, which objective?
9. In what way will you structure the presentation of the evidence?
10. What kinds of questions do you need to ask the defense and the prosecution?
11. How should the case be tried?
12. How will you conduct the questioning?

The groups discussed their respective questions for fifteen or twenty minutes. During that time, they were free to ask the teacher questions and, if necessary, have vocabulary clarified. The court was then called into session. The team of judges conducted the presentation of the evidence, asking both the prosecution and the defense alternately to present their arguments. The judges questioned the validity of statements, asked for clarification, and gave their own opinions. Both the prosecution and the defense were free to ask questions of the opposing team. In other words, while the discussion was ostensibly framed as a courtroom argument, little concern was paid to the rigid rules of courthouse order. Rather, the atmosphere allowed for a free interchange of ideas, creating as much conversation as possible. After twenty minutes of debate, the class ended, the court was symbolically recessed, and students were asked to consider their opinions more fully in preparation for the final presentation the following week.

The Alligator River trial took the entire class period the following week. The debate continued in the same fashion as on the first night. When it appeared that no resolution was imminent, Abigail was presented as the star witness. If the activity were used in a larger class, Abigail could be played by another student, preferably by one with a spirited imagination and adept at fielding difficult questions. Alternatively, Abigail could be portrayed by the instructor, as was the case on the occasion this activity was first used. Members from each team were allowed to pose one question and one follow-up inquiry. At all times, the person playing the role

of Abigail would best answer questions in a manner true to her personality as depicted in the "Alligator River Story." This requires a certain amount of creativity and an understanding of Abigail's traits as they evolved throughout the trial.

After all questions were answered, the teams met separately once again to plan for the closing arguments. Although the group members were still involved in their discussions, the court was called to order within five or ten minutes. One spokesperson from the prosecution and one from the defense presented a short and concise concluding statement, summing up the evidence and reasoning the implications. After both teams had presented their arguments, the judges gave their verdict based on an evaluation of the debate. If the activity were being used in a larger class which had a jury, the judges could present a final evaluation, give instructions to the jury, and ask the jury to decide the verdict. Again, in this case, it would be important to keep the jury active throughout the courtroom proceedings, perhaps by allowing jury members to interject with questions during the trial.

### Conclusion

Throughout the activity, the Alligator River trial proved itself popular with students. Despite an initial awkwardness over discussing a story with sexual implications, students became involved in the story and argued it heartily. It was successful at facilitating a discussion in which students stated opinions, defined abstract terms, and based their feelings on a certain amount of objective criteria. Team members quickly developed a rapport, and opposing teams displayed polite dissension. Ultimately, most of the language objectives were met by a majority of the students. It is worthy to note specifically a few examples of language that were produced as a result of the activity. While the expected notional language was used, it was surprising to see the extent to which the conditional structure was employed. Below are examples of language which were recorded during the activity:

She could have gone further down river to another boatman.  
She could have bought a yacht.  
She could catch alligators and make handbags (i.e. to sell in order to make money to buy her own boat).  
If you were Abigail, what would you do?  
If I were Abigail, I would . . .

If she had negotiated better, . . .

Abigail acted so because of Gregory.

Abigail is a twenty-two-year-old woman and therefore acted with passion.

But I am a woman and I am twenty-two and I wouldn't have acted such.

Several people were successful at using metaphoric language. One woman compared Abigail to a small child, thus trying to show her naivety. As mentioned earlier, another man referred to her as the epicenter of the story.

It is important to be aware of several potential problems with the activity. It was easy for the defense to base its argument on emotional criteria and they therefore needed some coaxing on new ways to look at the story and the evidence. Students also needed encouragement to evaluate the statements made by opposing team members, and thus to look for logical flaws in the arguments. It appeared that students did not naturally consider this line of reasoning. In both of these cases, however, the teams easily managed their own arguments after they had received initial assistance.

In conclusion, a courtroom-style trial provides for an activity which is especially appropriate for an advanced ESL/EFL classroom, as it is designed to elicit a wide range of notional and functional language. It requires students to combine language skills that they may have practiced in isolated lessons. Not only are they stating opinions, but they are also substantiating those opinions with specific details. Furthermore, they are defining abstract terms, again not in isolation but in the context of the story and its inherent meaning. Yet the nature of the courtroom atmosphere and the ensuing debate keeps the Alligator River activity itself structured in a pedagogic sense. Ultimately, the atmosphere created by the courthouse setting is the key element in the success of the activity. While a number of controversial stories may be used to initiate a debate, the final objective is to create an environment which will require the students to utilize specific notional and functional language, in this case by bringing ESL students to court.

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## Book Reviews

*THE AMERICAN WAY: AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN CULTURE*. Edward N. Kearny, Mary Ann Kearny, and Jo Ann Crandall. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984. Pp. 239.

Many ESL teachers have expressed a need for a textbook on American culture for upper-level students, one which can open the door to an understanding of American patterns of thinking. *The American Way* could meet this need for many teachers, either as a basic text or as a supplement to another text.

The book consists of twelve chapters, the first five establishing the historical roots of American values and the last seven showing the impact of these values on various aspects of society: business, government and politics, ethnic and racial assimilation, education, organized sports, and the family. It also considers how these values may affect and change society in the future. A common thread tying the chapters together is a comparison between Alexis de Tocqueville's America of 1831 and society today. Visual information in the form of pictures and graphs is abundant throughout the book. Each chapter, organized chronologically, describes the development of cultural institutions, the changes occurring in them, and their merits and demerits. The book also offers insights into aspects of U.S. society which Americans often take for granted, such as humanitarianism. These insights serve as a frame of reference for foreign students who need to read further information in textbooks designed for native speakers. Although this approach could be criticized as bland, it could provide a strong basis for the reading of more controversial information. It is easy to find a discussion of social problems, but our students first need a more basic understanding of patterns of American thinking.

Two kinds of exercises follow the readings: reading comprehension and cultural activities. The reading exercises are of mixed value. The authors recommend the book for upper intermediate to advanced classes with a basic vocabulary of 2500 to 3000 words. However, the reading exercises are quite undemanding: a vocabulary check is fill-in or matching; comprehension checks are largely

multiple choice, with True/False exercises in some chapters. The questions are generally memory-type with little or no critical thinking involved. The cloze summary emphasizes structure more than summarization skills. However, almost every chapter includes at least one useful graph taken from a recent periodical, giving the students more visual information for interpretation. Outlining skills are also built in; if the book is being used sequentially, these exercises can be helpful since the skills are developed chapter by chapter. Finally, several questions for discussion are proposed, though again they require little critical thinking. The purpose of these questions seems to be to help students compare American society with their native society, but the kind of comparison suggested is quite superficial. However, the comparison exercises do prepare students for the cultural exercises which follow.

The culturally-oriented exercises offer more potential to the teacher. Many chapters suggest proverbs related to the topic under discussion, and all chapters include a variety of activities to assist the students in drawing their own conclusions. For example, in the chapter "Government and Politics," the students are asked to decide how much economic support they think the U.S. government should provide American citizens; to interview Americans on the same topic and compare their responses with a graph from a Roper poll; to find the liberal and conservative views on six controversial issues by speaking to Americans; and to observe what kinds of questions about politics are appropriate in polite conversation. Finally, in "Suggestions for Writing," they are asked to analyze more deeply: for instance, "What principles of American life does [Sandra Day O'Connor's] appointment reflect?" Some chapters also include a section called 'Observing the Media,' in which the students are asked to discuss how the media reflects the chapter topic. For example, in "Basic American Values and Beliefs," the students are asked to analyze advertisements for high-status images. In summary, these exercises give excellent suggestions for learning about American culture whether they are used in conjunction with the readings or not.

For use in the classroom, the book is quite flexible. It could be used as a basic text, particularly for students towards the lower end of the recommended range. With advanced students, chapters can also be used individually. For example, in an American Culture class I introduced the students to the subject by using relevant

chapters of the book. This basic knowledge made it easier for them to develop their own opinions and ideas. My role was to encourage them to see American culture from an objective perspective, distinct from that of their culture or my personal one.

A major criticism of the book has been that it glorifies American culture and that it is overly patriotic. However, I believe that Americans are very self-critical and tend to overemphasize problems in their teaching of American culture. By presenting the fundamental aspects of American culture and two sides of problems, this book allows students to draw their own conclusions. It is also an excellent resource for teachers, native and non-native alike. An additional feature is that each chapter includes a list of recommended further reading; for example, the chapter entitled "Frontier Heritage" recommends titles by Steinbeck, London, Crane, Cooper, and Cather. I can recommend *The American Way* for ESL courses in which a primary focus is the development of cultural awareness and understanding.

Cynthia Etter

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Cynthia Etter has an M.Ed. in Higher Education with a focus on ESL from the University of Washington in Seattle. She has taught EFL in Spain and Japan and is currently an instructor at the ESL Center at the University of Washington.

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## Announcements

**COMMUNICATION AND SIMULATION.** July 1-4, 1986; Toulon, France. The International Simulation and Gaming Association (ISAGA) will hold its seventeenth international conference at the University of Toulon, France. The general theme of the conference will be Simulation and Communication and such areas as social interaction, language learning and behavior, intercultural communication, and management communication will be included. For more information please contact: David Crookall, University of Toulon, 83130 LA GARDE, France.

**RELC SEMINAR.** April 21-25, 1986; Singapore. The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Language Center (RELC) will hold its twenty-first regional seminar on the theme Patterns of Classroom Interaction in Southeast Asia. For further information, write to: Director (Attention: Chairman, Seminar Planning Committee), SEAMEO Regional Language Center, RELC Building, 30 Orange Grove Road, Singapore 1025, Republic of Singapore.

**Call for Papers: MITESOL NEWSLETTER.** The MITESOL Newsletter is now accepting contributions of articles which contribute to the field of foreign and second language teaching and learning in both the theoretical and practical domains, especially in the following areas: 1) curriculum, methods, and techniques; 2) classroom observation; 3) teacher education and teacher training; 4) cross-cultural studies; 5) language learning and acquisition; 6) overviews of, or research in related fields; 7) book reviews. Articles should be no longer than 1,200 words. All copy must be typed and double-spaced. Please note that articles will not be returned. All articles and inquiries should be directed to: Donna Brigman, Editor, MITESOL Newsletter, 211 Oakwood, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, U.S.A.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA TEAL '86.** March 13-15; Richmond, B.C. The Association of B.C. TEAL will hold its Annual Convention on the theme Looking Ahead. For further information, please contact: B.C. TEAL, 1208-1124 Lonsdale Avenue, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 2H1.

**THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (IATEFL).** April 1-4; Brighton, England. IATEFL will hold its twentieth conference in Brighton, England. Activities will include resource demonstrations, debates, and formal lectures. For further information, please contact: Mrs. B. Thomas, IATEFL, 3 Kingsdown Chambers, Kingsdown Park, Tankerton, Whitstable, Kent, England CT5 2DJ.

**TESOL '86.** March 3-7, 1986; Anaheim, California. For more information, contact: Michele J. Sabino, University of Houston-Downtown, One Main Street, Houston, TX 77002.

**TEACHER-TRAINING SEMINARS.** February 15-19, 21-25; August 20-24, 26-30, 1986; Odawara, Japan. The M.A.T. Program of the School for International Training will offer a series of professional development seminars for the experienced language teacher. The four- or five-day residential programs will be limited in size and to experienced teachers. Graduate credit is available. For further information, please contact: Japan Seminars/M.A.T. Program, School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301, U.S.A.

**TESOL SUMMER INSTITUTE.** July 7-August 15, 1986; Honolulu, Hawaii. The 1986 TESOL Summer Institute will be held at the University of Hawaii, Hawaii. At least half of the courses will run the full six weeks. Intensive three-week courses will run from July 7-25 and July 28-August 15. For additional information, please write: Pamela Pine, Assistant Director, TESOL Summer Institute, Department of English as a Second Language, University of Hawaii, 1890 East-West Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, U.S.A.

**JALT '86.** November 22-24, 1986; Hamamatsu, Japan. The Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) will hold their Twelfth Annual Conference on Language Teaching and Learning in Hamamatsu, Japan. The Conference will feature over two hundred workshops, demonstrations, and papers dealing with a wide range of topics relevant to language teaching, learning, and acquisition. For further information, please contact: JALT, c/o Kyoto English Center, Sumitomo Seimei Bldg. 8F, Shijo-Karasuma Nishi-iru, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600, Japan.

**Call for Papers:** The Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) is accepting proposals for papers, demonstrations, and workshops relevant to language teaching, learning, and acquisition for their Twelfth Annual Conference. For further information, please write to: JALT, c/o Kyoto English Center, Sumitomo Seimei Bldg. 8F, Shijo-Karasuma Nishi-iru, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600, Japan.

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